

BRILL'S COMPANION TO
THE RECEPTION
OF
ARISTOPHANES



Edited by
Philip Walsh

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Brill's Companion to the Reception of Aristophanes

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Preface and Acknowledgements

What were the origins of Old Attic Comedy? What was the nature of Aristophanic satire? What were Aristophanes' political views? What influence did he (and other playwrights) have on contemporary Athenian life? How and in what contexts was comedy performed? Who comprised Aristophanes' audience? To what end did he employ obscenity and sexuality? Were his comic heroines taken seriously, or were they laughed at and written off? What did Dionysus have to do with it?

These are only some of the interpretive questions that have been asked about the plays of Aristophanes and that have affected his reception since antiquity. All are posed in the past tense, but as this volume hopes to demonstrate, Aristophanic comedy remains in a vivid present tense. This is not to allege that the reception of Aristophanes has been historically consistent or aesthetically uncomplicated; his plays, after all, have not always been regarded as relevant or artistically significant. For instance, some, like *Clouds* and *Wealth* [*Plutus*], enjoyed immense popularity for centuries, while others, most notably *Lysistrata*, were discounted, censored, maligned, and suppressed. Today, though, things are different; in fact, in typical Aristophanic fashion, they are topsy-turvy. *Lysistrata* is now the play most widely translated, adapted, read, taught, and discussed in the United States and elsewhere; for non-specialists it *is* Aristophanic comedy. This upswing in popularity runs counter to the play's historically negative reception, but it is not completely unexpected if one understands that ambivalence has marked the reception of Aristophanes since the plays were first performed in Athens. In addition, conflicts, controversies, and disputes—at times social, political, aesthetic, ideological, and cultural—have commonly accompanied interest in his work.

Many of the uneasy and tense relationships that Aristophanic comedy has had with a post-Aristophanic world are challenging to unpack, but the chapters in this volume endeavor to do just that. Conflicts emerge, for instance, when a translator seeks to render Aristophanes into a modern language. Controversies flare when a theater group adapts a comic play and must make production choices about dialogue, staging, props, costumes, lights, and music (among other things). Disputes often erupt when teaching Aristophanes in the classroom. Ambivalence also runs deep in the study of classical reception: many of us read and study the extant plays and fragments of Aristophanes in order to learn about ancient Athens and its culture. In that process, however, we often learn a great deal about ourselves when evaluating Aristophanes

in the contemporary moment. What are our preferences for comedy, democracy, and the power of art? Do these preferences help to clarify why the plays Aristophanes are important at certain moments in history but not in others? When does Aristophanes become modern?

This last question was posed to me during a question and answer session in 2008. It was an unpretentious query that anyone who had spent years working with the comic plays should have been able to answer. In that moment, though, I stumbled, speculating half-heartedly about the late eighteenth century—as if one could put a time stamp on a question that is quite complicated and nuanced. Fortunately, I was not asked to elaborate, and only recently have I come to realize that “When does Aristophanes become modern?” is more of a riddle than a question. There is no linear or straightforward answer; the reception history of Aristophanes is at once vast and yet particular, global in scope but also confined in places to culturally specific contexts. Such is the field of classical reception studies; the research we follow is diverse and complicated, and our data always grows and shifts. Despite this untidiness, I would like to attempt a direct answer to this question, knowing full well the risks at hand: that Aristophanes becomes modern *when he matters again*—when his plays become more than inert records of the past, studied by philologists and antiquarians, and are explicitly intertwined with (and reflected in) contemporary debates over satire, politics, poetry, history, gender, and sexuality. Aristophanic comedy becomes modern when translations, adaptations, and performances become joyous experiments in the vernacular, as when Anne Dacier translated *Clouds* and *Plutus* into French in 1684 or when Swinburne translated the parabasis of *Birds* in 1880. Aristophanes becomes modern when poets, critics, playwrights, historians, artists, and teachers actively reinterpret the comic plays for the here and now. The plays of Aristophanes have mattered, and they will continue to do so. This volume, the first wholly devoted to their reception, will examine critical moments where Aristophanes’ presence has emerged in force in the post-Aristophanic world. It will explore how Aristophanes matters.

Writing in 1837, Benjamin Dann Walsh (1808–69), a graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, made the following observation in a preface to his verse translations of *Acharnians*, *Knights*, and *Clouds*:

The Comedies of Aristophanes are the Pompeii of Athens. In them have been enshrined the records of the private and public life of the Athenians during the most brilliant period of the republic; and in them alone we must seek for that personal knowledge of the high and mighty geniuses

of those days, which cannot be hoped or desired from the grave writings of the tragedian, the philosopher, or the historian.¹

Walsh's praise of Aristophanes is elegant, full of romance, flourish, and sentiment, but his comments also reveal several things significant to the reception of Aristophanes, both ancient and modern. Like Pompeii, parts and pieces of Aristophanic comedy have long been admired, discussed, adapted, and interpreted. However, like the notorious relics of Pompeii, other parts and pieces have been hidden, deliberately kept secret or obscured because of their perceived licentiousness. If perhaps we consider the comedies of Aristophanes as "the Pompeii of Athens," then studying their reception will seem a methodical stratigraphy of the ancient plays and the many layers of modern context. To investigate the dynamic, often volcanic, assimilation of Old Comedy into the ideals and ideas of later antiquity and the modern world is to chart the cultural fault lines along which the plays of Aristophanes have been plotted—to see where they themselves have prompted shifts and outright fractures in new contexts and strange worlds. Central to the long history of Greek drama at large, the study of the reception of Aristophanes can bring us not only to a better understanding of the ancient plays, but also a greater knowledge of their pliancy across time and space.

Given that the plays of Aristophanes have circulated for nearly 2,500 years, it is impossible for one book to tell their story of reception in full. The goal of this volume is to provide a substantive account of the reception of Aristophanes from antiquity to the present and to point interested readers to the many monographs, edited collections, journal articles, dissertations, essays, and blogs that treat other aspects of his reception.² Gaps inevitably remain, and I look forward to future scholarly work that pushes the boundaries of what we know about the reception of Aristophanes and that forges connections across temporal, linguistic, cultural, national, and disciplinary boundaries.

1 Walsh (1837) x. He planned to translate the other eight plays, but left England for the United States, where he became a farmer, businessman, and state entomologist for Illinois. See Venn and Venn (1954) 33; and Hall (2011) 25.

2 References to a wide range of studies on the reception of Aristophanes can be found in individual chapters and in the general bibliography. In addition, note the following work (not cited elsewhere, in chronological order): Hunter (2000), Prash (2012), Nooter (2013), Mhire and Frost (2014), Pormann (2014), Sharland (2014), Baldwin (2015), Morales (2015), and Hall (2016). The collected essays in Olson (2014b) deserve especial notice. Van Zyl Smit (2016) appeared too late to be incorporated into this volume.

This volume is divided into two parts: 1) *Aristophanes, Ancient and Modern: Debates, Education, and Juxtapositions*; and 2) *Outreach: Adaptations, Translations, Scholarship, and Performances*. **Niall Slater** opens part one with a wide-ranging and learned discussion of Aristophanes in antiquity; his chapter suggests that the ancient reception of Aristophanes was more textual and literary than creative. In terms of the modern reception, Aristophanes continues to have his readers, but a prevailing trend from the nineteenth century onward has been to perform a play in front of a live audience or to adapt Aristophanic comedy for radio, film, or other media platforms.

Charles Platter follows with a study that should be read by all who are interested in Greek comedy and reception. His is a sophisticated scholarly survey for the twenty-first century, exploring the intersections of modern thinking on Aristophanes, and explaining how theoretical arguments have impacted debates in Aristophanic studies over the past several decades.³

James Robson tracks changing treatments of Aristophanes' unbridled and sexualized language over the past century or so—in particular how Anglophone translators, adaptors, and others have dealt with issues of obscenity, gender, and sexuality. Using *Lysistrata* as a focal point, he demonstrates how the play's associations with pacifism and feminism fuel our contemporary fascination, while pointing out that our interpretations may, in fact, be misinterpretations of the original play.

The next two chapters highlight the plays of Aristophanes in an educational context, an underappreciated side of classical reception. **Stavroula Kiritsi** traces the presence of Aristophanes in modern Greek curricula, focusing in particular on two twentieth-century productions of Aristophanes in Greece: Dimitris Potamitis' *The Stories of Grandfather Aristophanes* and Karmen Rouggeri's *Ecclesiazusae Like a Fairy Tale*. Both productions rewrite Aristophanic comedy for children, and in so doing they make a case for why Aristophanes matters in the contemporary Greek world.

In a co-authored chapter on Aristophanes in the American college classroom, **John Given** and **Ralph Rosen** investigate the various modes in which the plays of Aristophanes are taught. Each then reflects on his experience with teaching Aristophanes: Rosen, at the University of Pennsylvania, in a non-historicist course called *Scandalous Arts in Ancient and Modern Society*; Given, at East Carolina University, in a staged performance of *Lysistrata*.

The final three chapters of part one describe how the plays of Aristophanes can be juxtaposed within diverse modern conversations about satire, Old

3 Platter's essay is a worthy heir to the surveys of Murphy (1956 and 1972), Dover (1957), and Storey (1987 and 1992).

Comedy, and the humanities at large. **Matthew Kinservik** documents eighteenth-century English attitudes towards Aristophanes. He takes on the assumption that being known as “the modern Aristophanes” or “the English Aristophanes” was always a good thing. Although Henry Fielding translated *Plutus* with William Young in 1742, he later condemned Aristophanes—in part because of his rivalry with Samuel Foote.

Mark Payne offers a bold and truly comparative reading of *Wasps*. He harnesses the critical and theoretical vocabulary of animal studies, a burgeoning cross-disciplinary field, as well as the example of musician Lee “Scratch” Perry, to remind us how *Wasps*, once popular and now understudied, engages enduring questions about humanity, animality, and what he calls the humanimal.

Donna Zuckerberg also reminds us about how Aristophanes matters. Her chapter applies the ideas and lessons of antiquity to the modern world, and describes how Aristophanic comedy collides with contemporary American notions of the comic persona. Her voice is that of an ambitious public intellectual: that there should be no quarrel between scholarship and popular culture; and that an accessible dialogue between ancient and modern can yield rich fruit for specialists and non-specialists alike.

Part two of this book, *Outreach: Adaptations, Translations, Scholarship, and Performances*, begins with a chapter by **Cécile Dudouyt** on two early-modern French texts inspired by Aristophanic comedy, Le Loyer’s *La Néphélocugie* (1579) and Racine’s *Les Plaideurs* (1668). She argues that the typical descriptors for literary reception—adaptation or imitation, for instance—do not accurately represent how Le Loyer and Racine fragmented *Birds* and *Wasps* respectively. By intermingling translated passages from these plays with innovative twists and new topical references, they made Aristophanes new for sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France.

Rosie Wyles picks up the story of the French reception of Aristophanes with Anne Dacier, whose translations of *Clouds* and *Plutus* (1684) exerted influence through the eighteenth century in both France and Britain. Her chapter demonstrates, among other things, the power of translation, and her analysis of Dacier’s work sheds light on the cultural, political, and linguistic fault lines which Aristophanic comedy exposed.

Extending the conversation on translation to nineteenth-century Britain, **Philip Walsh** offers a critical survey of prominent English translators and translations of Aristophanes. He also includes a discussion of Aubrey Beardsley’s illustrations of *Lysistrata* (1896), suggesting that they were symbolic of a significant shift in attitude towards Aristophanic comedy in Britain and beyond.

Gonda Van Steen investigates the reception of Aristophanes in modern Greece through creative adaptation. In 1902, Andreas Nikolaras published

Panathenaia, a comedy in three acts modelled on *Frogs* and other Aristophanic plays. Although little known today, Nikolaras' play provides insight into early twentieth-century Greek conceptualizations of comedy and tragedy, and the chapter contributes to our understanding of Greek theater history.

C.W. Marshall explores the history of the Cambridge Greek Play, with a chapter focused on J.T. Sheppard, who served as Provost of King's College for over twenty years (1933–54), and who played Peithetairos as an undergraduate in 1903. Utilizing contemporary reviews and other archival materials, Marshall tells a fascinating story about classics at Cambridge and Sheppard's long engagement with Aristophanes.

Adaptation, translation, and performance were not the only ways that the general public came to appreciate Aristophanes. Scholarship can also engage an interested audience, and **Mike Lippman** evaluates how Gilbert Murray, better known for his work on and translations of Euripides, spent years thinking about, commenting on, and popularizing Aristophanic comedy. His intellectual evolution over several decades is interesting to track, for it reflects not only the critical cross-currents of the early twentieth century but also how the Great War and its aftermath impacted Murray and members of his generation.

Gregory Baker presents a deeply researched and meticulous chapter that situates Aristophanes within an era of late modernist experimentation and linguistic nationalism in Scotland. He explains how Douglas Young's translations of Aristophanes, *The Puddocks* and *The Burdies*, came to be in the 1950s, and how they were politically and culturally important.

Alexandre Mitchell offers a fascinating chapter that explores the recent popularity of *Lysistrata* through visual media. Specifically, he surveys over forty posters that advertised performances of *Lysistrata* in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and France, highlighting and contrasting "traditional" representations of the play and "feminist" representations in his analysis.

Finally, **David Konstan** closes the book with an afterword that contextualizes Aristophanic comedy, how it works, and why it matters. He reflects on some of the ideas and questions explored in this volume, and he discusses the field of reception studies, as well as the value and challenges of cross-disciplinary work.

A book of this size and scope could not have been completed without a great deal of help and support. I would first like to acknowledge Meaghan Menzel, an undergraduate student at Washington College who served as my research assistant during the summer and fall of 2015. Meaghan worked fastidiously on all aspects of the *Companion*: compiling the general bibliography, drafting the index, and commenting on the text. She was an invaluable intellectual partner,

whose curiosity, positive attitude, sense of humor, and attention to detail I greatly admire. I would also like to thank Nancy Drazga, whose generosity helped bring this book to completion; and Gregory Baker, who offered valuable advice along the way and who organized a panel with me on reception and Greek drama at the 2014 meeting of the American Comparative Literature Association.

I stand on the broad intellectual shoulders of my teachers and mentors. The late Lew Leadbeater taught me how to read Greek with purpose and enthusiasm. My dissertation readers, Kenneth Haynes, David Konstan, and Stephen Foley, taught me how to think both precisely and imaginatively. I learned much about ancient comedy from Deborah Boedeker, Pura Nieto Hernández, and Adele Scafuro. I studied with the indefatigable Bill Hutton and Martha Jones at the American School of Classical Studies in Athens. From the Palace of Zakros in Crete to the Theater of Dionysus in Athens, they made Greece come alive to an eager graduate student.

I am grateful to audiences at Brown University, The College of William and Mary, and University College London for intelligent and thought-provoking discussions; and to Washington College for providing travel and faculty enhancement funds.

I want to thank the general editor of this series, Kyriakos Demetriou, and the staff at Brill, including Tessel Jonquière, Tessa Schild, Theo Joppe, and Caroline van Erp. I would also like to thank the contributors to this volume, whose conversations over the phone, via email, in hotel lobbies, and in coffee houses sustained my enthusiasm for this project over time.

Finally, I want to extend my deepest gratitude and love to my wife, Mindy; my children, Brian, Eleanor, and Andrew; and my parents and brother.

Philip Walsh

Chestertown, MD

July 2016

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PART 1

*Aristophanes, Ancient and Modern: Debates,
Education, and Juxtapositions*



Aristophanes in Antiquity: Reputation and Reception

Niall W. Slater

When Aristophanes made his last exit sometime after 387 BC, he left his plays to his sons and his reputation to posterity.¹ The world of comedy had changed considerably during his forty year career, not least because of Athens' defeat in the Peloponnesian War in 403. Where early in his career Aristophanes had sought to shape his own reputation in part through his self-presentation in his own comedies, especially through the parabases, which included attacks on his comic rivals, his final plays no longer engage in such straightforward rivalry.²

Until recently a dearth of evidence suggested that, apart from one or two posthumous productions by one of his sons, Araros, Aristophanes' plays vanished from the world's stages as well. The view from Athens certainly makes it look this way. The fourth century saw continuing, even strengthening interest in the great tragedians of the fifth century, especially Sophocles and Euripides, and provision was made at the Dionysiac festivals for revivals of old tragedy within the official program starting in 386 BC. From 339, the Athenians also began to put on an "old comedy" at the City Dionysia, but this seems in fact to have meant the works of what we would now call the poets of Middle and New Comedy, such as Anaxandrides.³ One tantalizing fragment of an inscription (to whose place in the canonization of Athenian theatre history we will return below) may suggest that a play of Aristophanes was put on in this way, but most scholars seem to think the incomplete name on the stone refers to the fourth century poet Aristophon or perhaps to an original fifth-century

1 In *OCD* ³ s.v. Aristophanes, Dover gives his death as in or shortly before 386, an inference from the production of his *Cocalus* in 387; cf. Henderson (1998) 1–3.

2 On the parabases see especially Hubbard (1991) and more generally Slater (2002). Cf. Telò (2014) 113–5 on the role of the parabases in shaping ancient scholarly reception of Aristophanes.

3 Evidence in *IG* ¹¹² 2318 fr. g & h col. xii, lines 1564–5; see Pickard Cambridge (1968) 104–7, 124; and Millis and Olson (2012) 25, 46, 57–8. Cf. Hartwig (2014) 211–3. *παλαιὸν δράμα* in effect simply meant "previously performed"; cf. Hanink (2014) 61 n. 3.

performance of Aristophanes.⁴ A play called *Monotropos* (*The Hermit*) was the old comedy revived in 169 BC, but we cannot tell whether this was a revival of a work by Phrynichus, first produced in 414, or a work of the Middle Comedy poet Anaxilas, both credited with such a title. Platonius, writing about the history of comedy in *On the Different Forms of Comedy*, tells us that the text he possessed of Cratinus' comedy *Odysseis* (*Odysseuses*) had no parts for a chorus, yet surviving fragments attributed to this play must come from choral lyrics. Andrew Hartwig infers from this that Platonius was reading a text reworked for re-performance in a period when choral interludes were no longer standard.⁵

When we look to the Greek West, however, in the generation or two after the death of Aristophanes, evidence emerging in the last few decades has come to paint a substantially different picture. Study of south Italian vase painting, especially in the work of Oliver Taplin and Eric Csapo, has conclusively demonstrated that works of Aristophanes and most probably those of other poets of Old Comedy continued to appear on the stages of Magna Graecia well into the fourth century.⁶ The key turning point here was the recognition that a vase fragment in Würzburg, the so called Würzburg Telephus, in fact showed the scene from Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae* parodying Euripides' *Telephus*. A lost south Italian vase, once in Berlin, almost certainly showed the opening scene of Aristophanes' *Frogs*, and Csapo has now demonstrated conclusively that the scene of a man with a sword kneeling on an altar on fragments of very humble molded vases must represent the other *Telephus* parody from Aristophanes'

4 IG II² 2321. See Pickard Cambridge (1968) 108–7, 124; and Millis and Olson (2012) 113–4 (and further discussion below of the “Didascaliae”). The letter forms on the small fragment are apparently not sufficiently diagnostic to settle the dating question, nor can it be placed with relation to other fragments. Millis and Olson argue that the organization of information resembles that of other entries securely datable to the fourth century and therefore is more likely to refer to a performance of the known fourth-century poet Aristophon. The possibility remains that it could refer to a fourth-century re-staging of Aristophanes in the category of “old comedy.”

5 Hartwig (2014) 212 and n. 41; cf. the detailed discussion in Sommerstein (2009a). (Csapo, by contrast, harbors the darker suspicion that some ancient scholar, in thrall to Peripatetic theories of change in comedy, simply excised the choruses in the belief that they did not belong in a Middle Comedy (Csapo (2000) 126).) One should also bear in mind the possibility that performances on tour or in very distant theatres might have dispensed with the chorus, even when one was still standard at a large urban festival, and the texts of comedy that reached Alexandrian scholars may have come from much more varied sources than those of tragedy, whether one believes the story about Ptolemy borrowing the Athenian state copies of the latter or not. Cf. Nervegna (2007).

6 Taplin (1993); and Csapo (2010a).

Acharnians.⁷ The case that a vase by the painter Asteas shows a scene from Eupolis' *Demes* seems almost certain. The fact that *Thesmophoriazusae* contained so much parody of Euripides must certainly have made it seem more exportable to south Italy and elsewhere than Aristophanes' most political comedies.⁸ On the other hand, tragic parody is a relatively small proportion of *Acharnians*, and Eupolis' *Demes* would likely have demanded some interest in the Athenian politics of its audiences as well.

Just how to account for Aristophanes' survival on the stages of the Greek West for a generation or two after his death thus remains a very interesting question. Some would seek a broader generic explanation and see the interest particularly in paratragic comedy as dependent, if not in fact parasitic, on the continuing and growing appetite for fifth-century tragedy.⁹ This in part begs the question of why such a relationship did not obtain back in Athens, where no evidence for revivals of Aristophanes or other paratragic Old Comedies (such as those of Strattis) can be found, although interest there in the tragedies of Euripides (and to a lesser extent Sophocles and Aeschylus) was just as keen.¹⁰ Perhaps the disappearance of Aristophanes from the stages of mainland Greece was not as complete as the evidence from Athens might suggest. Intriguing in this connection is Richard Green's suggestion that a theatrical terracotta figurine of an old woman, holding a large drinking cup just like the one shown on the Würzburg Telephus and made at Corinth, might be evidence for a Corinthian production of *Thesmophoriazusae*.¹¹ A more personalized rather than socio-cultural explanation for the afterlife of Aristophanes on stage in Magna Graecia may be at hand. Alan Sommerstein has made the speculative but very appealing suggestion that Aristophanes' younger son Araros, who produced the last of his father's plays in Athens, may also have been engaged in promoting his father's works outside Athens in the decade or so after Aristophanes' death. Both Araros and his older brother, Philippos,

7 Csapo (2010a) 64–5.

8 The earlier insistence of Csapo that *Thesmophoriazusae* was a “political” play seems special pleading at best; indeed, one of the best arguments for dating *Lysistrata* (the other play of 411) to the Lenaea, before the oligarchic coup that spring, and *Thesmophoriazusae* to the City Dionysia after the oligarchs struck, is precisely how carefully *Thesmophoriazusae* avoids contemporary politics (Csapo (2000) 127). There is an intriguing irony in the fact that *Lysistrata*, undoubtedly the most produced Aristophanic play in the modern period, is utterly unattested in ancient performance after its one Athenian airing.

9 Hartwig (2014) 212–4.

10 See recently Telò (2014) 121–4. On Strattis' career and reception in antiquity, see Orth (2009) 17–29; and Miles (2009).

11 Green (2014) 368.

wrote comedies for the Athenian festivals in their own right, but there is a long gap between Araros' last production for his father in Athens and his first production in his own name sometime after 375, during which he well could have been pursuing a producing career with his father's plays, especially in the Greek cities of south Italy and Sicily.¹² Whatever the real explanation of Aristophanes' stage afterlife for a time west of Athens, however, that story comes to an end by the second half of the fourth century.

At home in Athens, it seems likely that Aristophanes' plays survived primarily through and for a reading public. Aristophanes himself provides the evidence for readers of plays after their original stage productions. He shows Euripides living on in written form when in *Frogs* 52–3 he attributes Dionysus' yearning for the recently deceased poet to the god's reading of Euripides' *Andromeda*. In the next century Aristotle seems to expect his students to have sufficient knowledge of Aristophanes' plays to compare his dramaturgy to that of Sophocles in their ways of depicting men in action (πράττοντας γὰρ μιμοῦνται καὶ δρῶντας ἄμφω, *Poetics* 1448a).¹³ The sheer volume of surviving fragments from poets of Old Comedy contemporary with or a little later than Aristophanes suggests a public knowledge that can only have come from reading their plays by the late fourth century.¹⁴

What Aristophanes and his fellow Old Comedians missed out on was the kind of official canonization that fifth-century tragedy enjoyed from the Athenian demos. When in the later fourth century the Athenian statesman Lycurgus re-organized the festivals of the Dionysia and rebuilt the Theatre of Dionysus, he also made provision for official state copies of the works of the great fifth-century tragedians to be kept in the state archives. The absence of Old Comedy and its poets at this moment is notable. Lycurgus' program was certainly not just a literary one. Although the source is a late one, Pseudo-Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus* connects his plan for official state copies of the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides with the erection of statues of

12 Sommerstein (2010a) 403–4. Philippos, presumed to be the older son because he bore his grandfather's name, started producing his comedies well before Araros.

13 Whether Aristotle himself approved or disapproved of Aristophanic comedy is a matter of some dispute: see Janko (1984) 66–7, 205–6, with references.

14 Judging from the number of surviving fragments, Sommerstein argues persuasively that even some plays from the generation before Aristophanes found a reading public as well (Sommerstein (2010a) 404 and n. 22). Moreover, while some tragedy texts may have begun circulating in anthologies of excerpts in the fourth century (cf. briefly Hanink (2014) 163), this seems far less likely for texts of Old Comedy.

these three tragedians at the Theatre of Dionysus.¹⁵ Centuries later Pausanias saw them still in the theatre, though now accompanied by statues of many other lesser dramatists, and the surviving portrait types of the three tragedians most likely derived from this monument.¹⁶ Relatively soon thereafter a statue of Menander was placed in the precincts of the theatre as well, probably as a commemoration not long after his death; it was the work of Kephisodotos and Timarchos, sons of Praxiteles, and seems to have been much copied.¹⁷ By this time, however, neither Aristophanes nor any of his contemporaries from the age of Old Comedy rated any such individual public monument.¹⁸

If we glance forward for a moment, we will find some representations of Aristophanes in later antiquity, though not descended from any contemporary or near contemporary archetype.¹⁹ A few examples of double portrait herms pair the securely identified sculptural type of Menander with a head representing Aristophanes, but this seems to have been a fantasy re-creation,

15 [Plutarch], *Lives of the Ten Orators: Lycurgus* 841F; see the important discussion in Hanink (2014) 60–91.

16 Pausanias 1.21.1. On the statue types see Richter and Smith (1984) 74–8 (Aeschylus), 121–4 (Euripides), and 205–9 (Sophocles), with further references to Richter (1965). It may be worth noting that the Athenians honored the fourth century tragedian Astydamas with a bronze statue, whose base has been found, and according to Diogenes Laertius 2.43, it went up before the statues honoring Aeschylus and his contemporaries; cf. Hanink (2014) 183–8.

17 Richter and Smith (1984) 159–65; Fittschen (1991); Dillon (2006) 102; and briefly on the sculptors, Pliny *Natural History* 34.51.

18 There may be one curious exception, though continuity seems highly unlikely. Book 2 of the *Palatine Anthology* contains a hexameter poem by Christodorus describing the bronze sculpture collection in the Gymnasium of Zeuxippus in Constantinople in the sixth century AD. A statue of “the gifted Cratinus,” who “brought sprightly comedy to greater perfection” (ἀριστονόοιο Κρατίνου / ... κῶμον ἀεξήσας, φιλοπαίγμονος ἔργον ἀοιδῆς, *AP* 2. 357–60), appeared there, paired immediately with a statue of Menander. A statue in bronze suggests a very large investment in commemorating the poet of Old Comedy, perhaps then a public commemoration, but where and when is impossible to guess, let alone how it ended up in the collection in Constantinople. Localities in the east were still erecting bronze statues to honor contemporary poets: in 127 AD the city of Halicarnassus decreed a bronze statue to honor the tragic poet C. Iulius Longianus, to be erected in the gymnasium “next to the old Herodotus” (*Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua* 8, no. 418c; cf. Graf (2015) 121). Once statues of dramatic poets had a certain iconography, might an imperial bronze of a local poet have been re-purposed as “Cratinus” in Constantinople?

19 The suggestion that the Attic grave stele of a comic poet known as the Lyme Park Relief (see Bieber (1961) 48 and fig. 201) commemorated Aristophanes has, alas, been convincingly refuted by Scholl (1995), who argues that it shows rather the comic poet Epigenes.

and one displayed in private spaces such as libraries rather than in the space of public monuments.²⁰ The base of a herm without its head found at the Villa of Hadrian carried the inscription: Ἀριστοφάνης Φιλίππιδου Ἀθηναῖος (Aristophanes, son of Philippides, the Athenian).²¹ Also at Tivoli, though apparently no longer to be located, was discovered a herm of a New Comedy poet, inscribed Φιλῆμων Δάμωνος Συρακόσιος (Philemon, son of Damon, the Syracusan).²² More recently, a portrait herm of Eupolis was excavated in Greece.²³ Though suggestive of imperial tastes, such works do not reflect a real popular tradition of representation.

Aristophanes did find his place in some very important shared monuments erected in the late fourth and early third centuries BC, probably as part of a larger program to assert Athens' centrality in the history of the Greek theatre, but in one sense he thus became just one name in the long tradition. Around the time of the Lysurgan reforms a large inscription was erected on the Acropolis, detailing the victors in the contests of the City Dionysia, IG II² 2318; it is often referred to as the Fasti.²⁴ Within the next few decades two more major inscriptions were put up, both of these in the precincts of the Theatre of Dionysus. The inscription conventionally called the Didascaliae (IG II² 2319–2323a) seems to have recorded much fuller details of both the City Dionysia and the Lenaea contests, including details about plays that competed but did not win, while another inscription, the so-called Victors' List (IG II² 2325), recorded the names of victorious poets and the number of their victories in order of their first competition victory.

By the end of the fourth century, therefore, Aristophanes' reputation rested wholly on a literate and literary reception. Plato certainly helped shape the reception of Aristophanes. There is no way to determine for certain whether a charming epigram that comes down to us attributed to Plato is really by the philosopher:

20 Richter and Smith (1984) 94–5; and Richter (1965) 140–1 and figs. 787–93. Note particularly the example at Wilton House, Cloisters, inv. nr. 1963.3.3.

21 IG XIV 1140 (*Inscriptiones Italiae* IV, 1 558); Richter (1965) 141. Note that the inscription's Philippides is an error for Philippos.

22 IG XIV 1221 (*Inscriptiones Italiae* IV, 1 587); Richter (1965) 236–7.

23 Kavvadias (2000).

24 For the text, see Millis and Olson (2012). Millis indicates that nearly all the fragments of IG II² 2318 were found on the Acropolis, so the original monument of which it must have formed a part surely should have been there, not in the theatre precincts (Millis (2014) 434 n. 26, although contrast oddly his statement about the “three monuments” on 443).

αἱ Χάριτες τέμενός τι λαβεῖν, ὅπερ οὐχὶ πεσεῖται,
ζητοῦσαι ψυχὴν εὖρον Ἀριστοφάνους.²⁵

The Graces, seeking for themselves a shrine that would not fall,
found the soul of Aristophanes. (trans. J.M. Edmonds)

He certainly, however, depicted Socrates in his *Apology* (18b–d) as attributing some of the public hostility directed at himself to Aristophanes' portrait of him in the *Clouds*, yet Plato also contributed a memorable portrait of the comic poet in his *Symposium*.²⁶ As we shall see, the *Clouds* never thereafter falls out of discussion concerning Aristophanes and is one of the three plays of which the most manuscripts survive.²⁷

After this the story shifts emphatically to Alexandria and the work of the scholars at the great Library.²⁸ Aristophanes was of interest already to the first generation of scholars at the library: the names of Callimachus, Eratosthenes, and Lycophron all appear as authorities cited in the later scholia, though their interests were in the evidence Aristophanes provided for language, history, and even species of birds.²⁹ In the second century BC the wide-ranging Aristophanes of Byzantium prepared a critical edition of the text of all the comedies, marking problematic passages with critical signs such as those used for the texts of the Homeric poems. He may also have divided the lyrics of the

25 Olympiodorus, *Life of Plato* i and ii. 384. Text with notes: Gabathuler (1937) 3.

26 Dating the production of Plato's works is by no means easy. Many consider the *Apology* Plato's first work and would put it already in the 390s, while Aristophanes was still alive (Guthrie (1975) 71–2; and Kahn (1996) 46). Most (like Dover (1965)) would place the *Symposium* in the later 380s and consider the inclusion of Aristophanes as evidence that the poet himself was dead by that point (Henderson (1998) 4). For the influence of Plato in establishing Aristophanes as “the exemplar of comedy” by the late fourth century, see Storey (2003a) 3–4, and for Plato's reception of Aristophanes more generally, see Platter (2014). Clay (1975) argues that Aristophanes' speech in the *Symposium* is fundamental to the structure of the whole dialogue.

27 Sommerstein (2010a) 413–4, with 139 manuscripts, second only to *Wealth*.

28 For a brief survey of scholarship on Aristophanes, see Dickey (2006) 28–9. In what follows here, I rely heavily on the invaluable study of the history of the text in Sommerstein (2010a), especially 406–12 on Hellenistic scholarship.

29 Lowe (2013) argues that the work of Lycophron on Old Comedy was extensive and points out that he was not the only practicing tragedian and member of the Alexandrian Pleiad to interest himself in comedy. That tragedians helped shape the scholarly agenda for comedy at the Library is indeed intriguing.

plays into their metrical cola.³⁰ His introductory notes to the plays became the basis for the prose hypotheses that appear in our medieval manuscripts, though certainly much reworked. In the next generation Euphronius produced a ὑπομνήμα on Aristophanes' *Wealth*, the earliest attested poetic commentary.³¹ Aristarchus, so important in the history of Homeric scholarship, also devoted attention to the text of Aristophanes.³² We hear of other commentaries, some devoted only to *Frogs* (perhaps because of its relationship to tragedy), as well as studies of historical figures mentioned in the comedies. Much of this work was swept up at the end of the first century BC by the insatiable commentator and compiler Didymus. A more shadowy figure named Symmachus of the late first or early second century AD added to this body of material. These collected commentaries became the source for the older scholia recorded in the margins of mediaeval manuscripts.

For four or five centuries, from the earliest work at the Library of Alexandria down to the fourth century AD, the readership and dissemination of Aristophanes can in part be inferred from his survival in papyri. Identifiable fragments of Aristophanes predominate, but there are multiple examples from Eupolis and Cratinus, as well as a substantial number of clearly comic verses whose authorship is unknown.³³ From this evidence (absolute numbers are small and so perhaps not statistically representative) Aristophanes therefore

30 As Sommerstein points out, however, the colometry in the mediaeval manuscripts of the plays is said explicitly to be based on the work of Heliodorus in the first century AD (Sommerstein (2010a) 408 n. 40). *Wealth* may seem a curious choice to modern readers, as even Hellenistic readers would have needed more help with almost any other play in the canon, but its moralizing tendencies must have appealed then, as indeed later they helped to secure its pride of place in the so-called Byzantine triad.

31 Wilson (2007a) 41. Some place Euphronius before Aristophanes of Byzantium, perhaps even as his teacher (Dickey (2006) 28–9; and Lowe (2013) 354), but as Henderson indicates, he was using a text with critical signs which must indicate he followed the work of Aristophanes of Byzantium (Henderson (1987) lxii n. 18). Cohn (1907) points out that the scholia also cite Euphronius repeatedly on *Wasps* and *Birds*; this might suggest he wrote individual commentaries on these as well.

32 Muzzolon (2005).

33 See especially Sommerstein (2010a) 410–2. Wilson (2014) 656–7 is much more skeptical of finding meaning in these numbers. A quick survey of the *Leuven Database of Ancient Books* turns up around 70 papyri with texts of, or commentary on, Aristophanes, to contrast with seven or eight examples each for Cratinus and Eupolis. Hall mentions an ostrakon from the Maximianon in upper Egypt, to be published by Annie Bélis of the CNRS, Paris, that seems to preserve some of the Hoopoe's song from *Birds* with musical annotation, suggesting at least some continuing life for Aristophanes' songs (Hall (2002) 31 n. 103 and (2007) 8).

looks to be the biggest of the “Big Three” of Old Comedy, but literary and historical interest earned all three a readership, even if many readers already needed the help of a commentary to understand an Old Comedy fully.³⁴ As the format for the circulation of literary texts changes, however, from the papyrus roll to the codex, and then the parchment codex (and commentary moves from separate works to scholia preserved in the margins of codices), Aristophanes dominates our evidence for texts almost completely. The evidence also comes to focus almost entirely on the eleven plays we now have, which suggests that Aristophanes had already found a firm place in the school curriculum that continues into the Byzantine period.³⁵

Aristophanes is admired for the purity of his Attic Greek, but as performances of any Greek comedy (as distinct from mime and pantomime) disappear from stages and festivals, the content of his plays is assimilated to other comic and satiric forms for reading. For Antipater of Thessalonica in the age of Augustus, the books and the poet are already much the same thing:

βίβλοι Ἀριστοφάνευσ, θεῖος πόνος, αἴσιν Ἀχαρνέυς
 κισσός ἐπὶ χλοερὴν πουλὺς ἔσεισε κόμην·
 ἡνίδ’ ὅσον Διόνυσον ἔχει σελῖς, οἶα δὲ μῦθοι
 ἡχεῦσιν φοβερῶν πληθόμενοι χαρίτων.
 ᾧ καὶ θυμὸν ἄριστε καὶ Ἑλλάδος ἤθεσιν ἴσα,
 κωμικέ, καὶ στύξας ἄξια καὶ γελάσας.
 (*Anthologia Palatina* 9. 186)³⁶

Here’s Aristophanes in books, a divine production, over which
 Acharnae’s luxuriant ivy shook its long green locks.

34 See the remarks of Plutarch in the early second century on how “each reader needs his own scholar to explain things one by one” (οὕτω δεήσει γραμματικὸν ἐκάστῳ τὸ καθ’ ἕκαστον ἐξηγεῖσθαι, *Symposiaca* 712a). More learned readers may have enjoyed showing off their more *recherché* knowledge: Bowie points out that three orators of the Second Sophistic (Dio of Prusa, Aelius Aristides, and Maximus of Tyre) quoted Old Comedy more than Menander, and Eupolis and Cratinus just as much as Aristophanes (Bowie (2007) 33–4).

35 Wilson suggests the Atticist movement played a significant role in improving the fortunes of Aristophanes in the school curriculum (Wilson (2014) 657). His plays were a more advanced part of the curriculum than the texts of Menander, however (Nervegna (2014) 401).

36 Raines thinks “this epigram to have been written on an edition of Aristophanes, which was actually divided into ‘books’” (Raines (1946) 87–8 and n. 17). Epigram texts from Beckby (1957–58), translation author.

See how much Dionysus each page has, how greatly the stories
 resound, filled with fearful grace.³⁷
 O noblest comic heart, as the characters of Hellas merited,
 you both hated and laughed as they deserved.

A fashion among the epigrammatists for fictional epitaphs of the literary greats of the past produces an example for Aristophanes. A Diodorus memorializes the poet as himself a monument (μνᾶμα) of the past:

θεῖος Ἀριστοφάνευσ ὕπ' ἐμοὶ νέκυς, εἰ τίνα πεύθῃ,
 κωμικὸν ἀρχαίης μνᾶμα χοροστασίης.
 (*Anthologia Palatina* 7.38)

Divine Aristophanes lies dead beneath me. If you ask which one,
 it's the comic poet, the memorial of old-time staging.³⁸

Aristophanes' influence at Rome may have been more spoken of than actual. In a key and almost endlessly discussed passage in *Satire* 1.4, Horace announces that the "Big Three" of Old Comedy were a vital inspiration for Lucilius in creating Roman satire, and Aristophanes holds pride of place in the rising tricolon of his opening line of this story (*Eupolis atque Cratinus Aristophanesque poetae*, 1.4.1).³⁹ Niall Rudd thinks this is "special pleading in which Horace exaggerates the dependence of Lucilius on Old Comedy in order to claim that Aristophanes, Lucilius, and himself are all links in the same illustrious tradition."⁴⁰ Although Horace returns to the theme of Old Comedy as a model for societal correction in Lucilius in *Satire* 1.10 (*prisca comoedia*, 1.10.16), the

37 On the (self-)contradictory evaluations of Aristophanic style in this period, see Quadlbauer (1960) 79.

38 Uncertain whether Diodorus of Tarsus in the first century BC or Diodorus of Sardis, first century AD (Beckby (1957) 36 and 572).

39 Quintilian *Inst.* 10.1.66 praises the same three as exemplars of Old Comedy, in a different order but with much the same emphasis: *plures eius auctores, Aristophanes tamen et Eupolis Cratinusque praecipui*. For an extensive list of citations of these three together, see the texts in Storey (2003a) 40 n. 6.

40 Rudd (1966) 89. Cucchiarelli sees Horace as a much more serious student of Aristophanes (Cucchiarelli (2001) 33–55). Gowers points out that starting with this trio allows Horace "to stage an 'Aristophanic' synkrisis between himself and his Roman satirical 'father' Lucilius, the 'missing link' between H[orace] and Old Comedy" (Gowers (2012) 149). Ruffell explores the general relation between Old Comedy and Horatian notions of *libertas* in satire (Ruffell (2014) especially 293–302), while Nelson Hawkins (2015) suggests that

model is quite general, and when Horace stages his own consultation of the dead Tiresias in the underworld in *Satire* 2.5, there is little of Aristophanes here.⁴¹ Persius 1.124 refers to Aristophanes as the “grand old man” (*praegrandi . . . sene*) who, along with the named Cratinus and Eupolis, helped inspire his satire, but specific verbal echoes are again hard to prove. Friedrich Leo suggested that Roman scholars, particularly Varro, had developed a theory of satire’s derivation from comedy, but further allusions are rather scarce.⁴² Jennifer Ferriss-Hill has very recently argued that Horace and others not only had access to complete texts of Aristophanes at Rome but might even have seen a performance of Old Comedy, based on Suetonius’ statement that Augustus not only enjoyed *comoedia veteri* (*Augustus* 89) but “often” (*saepe*) mounted productions in the public games, but this is the most optimistic reading possible of some very scattered evidence.⁴³

Aristophanes had at least one very engaged reader in Antonine Rome, although it may be hard to generalize from his experience. The appallingly productive physician Galen lists among the hundreds of books he wrote himself five works dealing specifically with Old Comedy, including five volumes on *Ordinary Terms in Aristophanes*.⁴⁴ While we cannot be sure that Galen was compiling directly from his own complete texts of the plays rather than previous lists of terms, the emphasis on comedy and Aristophanes in particular is notable. Ralph Rosen suggests that Galen, not known for the diffidence of

the speaking penis of Horace, *Sat.* 1.2.68–72 has an Old Comic and indeed Aristophanic pedigree.

41 Rudd (1966) 236–7.

42 Leo (1889); cf. Hunter (1985); and Freudenburg (1993) 99–100.

43 Ferriss-Hill (2014) 38–44. Fontaine offers the most pessimistic view: “Attic Old Comedy made no discernible impact at all on the Latin-speaking population of Rome at any time, in either the creative arts or intellectual life” (Fontaine (2014) 404). While Augustus certainly knew Greek well enough to enjoy Aristophanes in the original, one wonders about the potential enjoyment of his plays by the broader Roman public, so most take this as a reference to older Latin comedy, but cf. also Cucchiarelli (2009–10) 247–8. Pliny the Younger mentions that a young Vergilius Romanus had just written a *comoedia vetus* in which he praised virtue and attacked vice using both real and fictional names for his targets (*fictis nominibus decenter, veris usus est apte*, *Ep.* 6.21.2–5), but it is not even clear whether he had written this in Greek rather than Latin, and it was certainly intended for a small reading audience (*librum legendumque*, 6.21.7), not public performance (Hawkins and Marshall (2015) 1). Cf. also Ruffell (2014) 302–8.

44 τῶν παρὰ Ἀριστοφάνει πολιτικῶν ὀνομάτων πέντε, *On His Own Books* 20.1. With these Galen lists three volumes on *Ordinary Terms in Eupolis* and one on *Ordinary Terms in Cratinus*. The rest of the works in this section of his long list include twenty-four volumes on *Terms in Attic Writers*, but nothing in their titles is specific to any genre other than comedy.

his opinions on other physicians and their methods, may have found in these texts an appealing model not only of comic style but also argumentative rhetoric; even more intriguingly, Galen seems to have used his knowledge of Aristophanic vocabulary as a means for arguing that a Hippocratic text was authentic and not a more recent forgery.⁴⁵

A few Latin writers of the Second Sophistic show some knowledge of Aristophanes, but it is not always clear whether they know complete texts of the plays or only collections of previous excerpts. Aulus Gellius admires Aristophanes as a *facetissimus poeta* (e.g., *Attic Nights* 1.15.19) and may even see him as one model for his own satire,⁴⁶ but while he cites passages both from plays now lost to us, as well as those preserved to us, he seems certain to have read only *Frogs* in its entirety.⁴⁷ Fronto had no interest in comedy, but Marcus Aurelius quotes Aristophanes twice.⁴⁸ Regine May's excellent study of theatricality in Apuleius' novel *The Golden Ass* finds just a few suggestive echoes and only one certain citation: an allusion to the opening of the *Frogs* that had probably become famous in its own right long before this.⁴⁹ In the inset tale of Cupid and Psyche, the abandoned Psyche eventually turns herself in to Venus, who sets her a series of cruel tasks, including a journey to the underworld. Despairing of finding a way there herself, Psyche plans to throw herself from the top of a tall tower (*turrim praealtam*)—whereupon the tower speaks to her and offers her advice on a better way to descend to Hades! While a talking tower may savor more of a fairytale than Aristophanic fantasy (though we might recall the cheese grater that testifies at the trial of Labes in *Wasps*), the plan of jumping from a lofty tower is the first one that Heracles offers Dionysus at the beginning of *Frogs* (ἀναβὰς ἐπὶ τὸν πύργον τὸν ὑψηλόν, 130). Apuleius'

45 Rosen (2010) 340–1; on the authenticity of the Hippocratic *Regimen*, Rosen (2014a) 169–71. See also Vogt (2005) 68–70, 73–9 for the clarity, accuracy, and memorability Galen found in texts expressed in verse.

46 Keulen (2009) 72–3, 105–6.

47 Holford-Strevens (2004) 236 and *passim*. Bozia suggests Gellius quotes Aristophanes as much to establish his own erudition as to engage with the comic past (Bozia (2015) 67).

48 At *Meditations* 4.23 the emperor invokes πόλι φιλῇ Κέκροπος ("beloved city of Cecrops"), the beginning of *Farmers* fr. 112 K-A (110 Kock), but this could easily be a floating tag, requiring no knowledge of the play (or even that it is Aristophanes). At *Meditations* 7.66.2 he cites *Clouds* 363, but this is a line on Socrates that Plato had earlier quoted in *Symposium* 221b. Can we be sure that Saint Paul knew he was quoting a dramatist when he cited Menander fr. 165 K-A (φθεῖρουσιν ἦθη χρησθ' ὁμιλίας κακαί) at 1 Corinthians 15:33?

49 May (2006) 198–201 on "Aristophanes and Apuleius."

tower proves particularly chatty, offering Psyche detailed instructions on what to do and what to avoid (*Metamorphoses* 6.17–19).⁵⁰

Aristophanes is clearly a key inspiration for Lucian of Samosata in the second century AD, as the latter transforms apodeictic rhetoric, philosophical dialogue, and other traditional prose forms into new kinds of literary entertainment.⁵¹ In his dialogue *The Twice Prosecuted*, Lucian portrays himself as taken to court by both the wife he has abandoned, personified Rhetoric, and the male friend he then took up with, Dialogue, for mistreatment. Keith Sidwell and Ian Storey have persuasively argued that Lucian is here expropriating and updating a scenario from Old Comedy: namely, Cratinus' *Wineflask*, wherein the comic poet portrayed himself as having abandoned his wife Comedy for his mistress Drunkenness.⁵² Lucian cheekily suppresses any reference to Cratinus. Through Dialogue's indictment of him, however, Lucian claims Aristophanes and Old Comedy (along with iambus and satyr play for that matter!) as literary predecessors:

καὶ τὸ μὲν τραγικὸν ἐκεῖνο καὶ σωφρονικὸν προσωπεῖον ἀφείλε μου, κωμικὸν δὲ καὶ σατυρικὸν ἄλλο ἐπέθηκε μοι καὶ μικροῦ δεῖν γελοῖον. εἰτά μοι εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ φέρων συγκαθεῖρξεν τὸ σκῶμμα καὶ τὸν ἴαμβον καὶ κυνισμόν καὶ τὸν Εὐπόλιν καὶ τὸν Ἀριστοφάνη, δεινοὺς ἀνδρας ἐπικερτομήσαι τὰ σεμνὰ καὶ χλευάσαι τὰ ὀρθῶς ἔχοντα. τελευταῖον δὲ καὶ Μένιππόν τινα τῶν παλαιῶν κυνῶν μάλα ὑλακτικὸν ὥς δοκεῖ καὶ κάρχαρον ἀνορύξας, καὶ τοῦτον ἐπεισήγαγεν μοι...⁵³
(*Bis Accusatus* 33)

He [Lucian] ripped off that tragic and restrained mask of mine and put on me another one, comic and satyric and just shy of ludicrous. Then he forced me into the same place and shut me in with ridicule and iambus and cynicism and Eupolis and Aristophanes, men with a talent for cutting down the serious and blowing up the upright. And finally he dug up

50 May (2006) 200–1 suggests that the tower seems “to be conscious of its intertextual prehistory.” Cf. Smith (2014) 334–5.

51 I am most grateful to James Brusuelas for sharing a copy of his dissertation on Lucian and Old Comedy with me (Brusuelas (2008)), which has greatly illuminated the selection of passages I touch on here. Earlier studies that index passages of Aristophanes cited or alluded to by Lucian include Ledergerber (1905) and Householder (1941); Anderson (1976) especially 141–9 is more skeptical. See also now Storey (2015).

52 Sidwell (2009b) 110–1; Storey (2015) 171–2; and earlier, Hirzel (1896) 302–3.

53 Texts of Lucian are from Harmon's Loeb, translations author.

some guy named Menippus, one of the old Dogs, a great barker and jagged-toothed, and set him on me . . .

Aristophanes' penultimate position in this list of attackers clearly emphasizes his importance, which is then fused with that of the Cynic philosopher Menippus.⁵⁴ As Bracht Branham demonstrates, "Menippus appears not as a historical figure, the author, but as a parodic elaboration . . . the unruly Cynic jester who inhabits an Aristophanic world of manic wishes and mythical machinations."⁵⁵

A number of explicit echoes and cheerful expropriations from the plays can be traced in the vast range of Lucian's works, but those involving challengers to the gods and the existing hierarchy of the universe are particularly notable.⁵⁶ In *Zeus the Tragic Actor* the king of gods and men complains to the other gods that Epicurus and his philosophy have caused the cessation of sacrifices from men to the gods. This setup is clearly a transformation of Peisthetairus' blockade of Olympus in *Birds*, but it is more than either mythical or philosophical parody. As Branham notes, its central debate "is closer in function to the mutual thrashings of an Old Comic *agôn* than to the deliberate scrutiny of a Platonic dialogue."⁵⁷ Menippus becomes both an aerobatic and necromantic (and thus Aristophanic) hero in Lucian. He flies up to Mount Olympus on a pair of mismatched birds' wings (one from an eagle, one from a vulture!) in the *Icaromenippus*, transforming Trygaeus' journey on the back of the dung beetle in *Peace* (just as Trygaeus had transformed a tragic Bellerophon).⁵⁸ In the *Trip to Hades* Menippus tells an unnamed friend about his recent trip to the underworld. While many made that journey both before and after Dionysus in *Frogs*, only Heracles himself, Dionysus, and now Menippus do it wearing a

54 For a penetrating explication of the influence of Aristophanes in the *Bis Accusatus* and the sophistication of Lucian as a reader of Aristophanes in the second century, see Rosen (2015), especially 153–6.

55 Branham (1989) 14.

56 Branham (1989) is invaluable throughout. In an important study of Aristophanic reception in the Second Sophistic more widely, Bowie offers more detail on a number of motifs or scenes in his dialogues that Lucian purloins and transforms from Aristophanes (Bowie (2007) especially 35–9).

57 Branham (1989) 174. Cf. Bozia (2015) 105–6.

58 It seems worth noting that Menippus makes his test flight from the Acropolis down to the theatre (ἀνελθὼν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀκρόπολιν ἀφῆκα ἑμμαντὸν κατὰ τοῦ κρημνοῦ φέρων ἐς αὐτὸ τὸ θέατρον, 10), which in context sounds like a direct allusion to Aristophanic inspiration, and thence ever higher and higher. The science-fiction writer and critic Brian Aldiss made the connection to Aristophanes as well (Aldiss (1977) 74). See also Brusuelas (2008) 60–6.

lionskin (τοῦ σχήματος...λεοντῇ, 1).⁵⁹ One certain Aristophanic allusion lies in Menippus' description of how he escaped from the underworld: one of the denizens promises to show him a "quick and easy shortcut" (ταχείαν γάρ σοι καὶ ἀπράγμονα ὑποδείξω ἀτραπὸν, 22) back to the upper world, which proves to be the route between Hades and the shrine of Trophonius. This both inverts Dionysus' search at the beginning of *Frogs* for a quick and easy route *down* to Hades⁶⁰ and probably alludes to the discussion of the oracle of Trophonius in *Clouds*, a favorite paratext of Lucian.⁶¹

Particularly intriguing is one passage in Lucian's *True Histories*, a narrative on its face largely a parody of the more outrageous narratives of historians combined with the *Odyssey*, but including a number of Aristophanic echoes.⁶² Near the end of Book 1, the first person narrator describes one incident on his journey through the air up to the moon:

τῇ δὲ ἐπιούσῃ ἄραντες ἐπλέομεν ἤδη πλησίον τῶν νεφῶν· ἔνθα δὴ καὶ τὴν Νεφελοκοκκυγίαν πόλιν ἰδόντες ἐθαυμάσαμεν, οὐ μέντοι ἐπέβημεν αὐτῆς· οὐ γὰρ εἶα τὸ πνεῦμα· βασιλεύειν μέντοι αὐτῶν ἐλέγετο Κόρωνος ὁ Κοττυφίανος· καὶ ἐγὼ ἐμνήσθην Ἀριστοφάνους τοῦ ποιητοῦ, ἀνδρὸς σοφοῦ καὶ ἀληθοῦς καὶ μάτην ἐφ' οἷς ἔγραψεν ἀπιστουμένου.

(*Vera Historia* 1. 29)

Setting off on the following day we sailed quite near the clouds and were amazed to spot the city of Cloudcuckooland, but we didn't set foot on it: the wind did not allow it. Coronus son of Cottyphion was said to be king over them. And in fact I remembered Aristophanes the poet, a gifted man and truthful and foolishly disbelieved for what he wrote.

59 He also wears Odysseus' cap and carries Orpheus' lyre. See Brusuelas, who suggests that Menippus' journey is "a trip through literary trips to Hades (e.g. Homer, Orphic myth, Aristophanes)" (Brusuelas (2008) 52).

60 At *Frogs* 118 Dionysus asks "which way we could get down to Hades quickest" (ὅπη τάχιστ' ἀφίξομεθ' εἰς Αἴδου κάτω), and Heracles offers him a shortcut (ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἀτραπὸς, 123)—which turns out to be taking hemlock!

61 Strepsiades says that he is as afraid of entering Socrates' Thinkery as if it were the shrine of Trophonius: ὥς δέδουκ' ἐγὼ / εἴσω καταβαίνων ὥσπερ εἰς Τροφωνίου (*Clouds* 507–8). One wonders if commentary on Aristophanes' text was the primary source for keeping the memory of the cult of Trophonius alive, although Heraclides of Pontus wrote a lost work on his cult as well.

62 On Aristophanic references in this work, see Georgiadou and Larmour (1998) 24–7 and *passim*.

Lucian thus not only salutes one of his predecessor's most famous creations but also suggests Aristophanes' importance for the history of imagining the fantastic.⁶³ This in turn suggests a connection to motifs of wonder and paradoxography in the various subgenres of prose fiction.

The chronology of the development of long fictional narratives remains a very vexed subject. One work relatively early in that development is the *Wonders Beyond Thule*, by Antonius Diogenes, originally in twenty-four books but now known only through the summary preserved by the ninth-century bishop Photius in his *Bibliotheca*. Diogenes' work probably dates to the very end of the first century AD or the beginning of the second. Photius paraphrases a dedicatory letter from the beginning of the work in which Diogenes claimed "that he himself was a poet of Old Comedy" (λέγει δὲ ἑαυτὸν ὅτι ποιητῆς ἐστὶ κωμωδίας παλαιᾶς, 111a34–5). The novel related the wide-ranging adventures, erotic and otherwise, of Deinias and Dercyllis. These included travels not only to very distant parts of the earth but also a *katabasis* in which Dercyllis met the ghost of her old servant in the Underworld, all contained within a frame narrative of the discovery of this account written on wooden tablets and buried with Deinias at Tyre, to be discovered after Alexander's capture of that city. This does not sound like the world of Old Comedy to readers today, but Ewen Bowie and others suggest that the element of distant and fantastic travels may have seemed to Diogenes a direct inheritance from the fantastic voyages in Aristophanes and other comic poets.⁶⁴ If so, Diogenes may in turn have

63 Cf. Bowie (2007) 39; Brusuelas (2008) 30; and Smith (2014) 327. Ní Mheallaigh draws the stronger conclusion that Aristophanes is Lucian's source for metafictional awareness: "by praising Aristophanes, Lucian aligns himself with the genre of Old Comedy, which—like *True stories* itself—derived much of its comic value from its exposure its own fictionality, and involved the audience actively in the poet's interplay of the fictional world of the characters, and the 'real' world of the audience" (Ní Mheallaigh (2014) 174). The nice touch of seeing but being unable to land at Cloudecockooland acknowledges its uniqueness and Lucian's unwillingness to rewrite it in detail. In this it resembles Vergil's treatment of Homer's Circe, when in *Aeneid* 7.23–24 the Trojans sail by her island, but Neptune sends a wind to steer them away (*Neptunus ventis implevit vela secundis, / atque fugam dedit*).

64 For example, in his Budé edition, Henry translates κωμωδίας παλαιᾶς as "une intrigue ancienne" ("an old plot") and insists in a footnote "Il va de soi qu'il ne s'agit pas, à cette époque tardive, de la comédie ancienne" ("It goes without saying that this, at this late period, is not Old Comedy") (Henry (1960) 147). Ancient writers were more likely to call the category of Old Comedy ἀρχαία rather than παλαιά (cf. Morgan (2009) 135–6 and n. 29), but a ποιητής . . . κωμωδίας παλαιᾶς seems much likelier to refer to the comic tradition rather than "story" in general.

channeled that element into subsequent prose romances, as Bowie suggests, comparing the more limited travels in the early novel of Chariton to the wonders seen on the more distant adventures in later novels: “the input of fantasy from Aristophanes into Antonius Diogenes may have been one reason for the greater place of paradoxography in the presentation of travel by these later ‘sophistic’ novelists.”⁶⁵

Themes such as those of travel and paradoxography aside, we find but one explicit allusion to Aristophanes in those later sophistic novelists: in Achilles Tatius’ *Leucippe and Clitophon*. At the end of this complicated plot, the hero Clitophon is being prosecuted for adultery by Thersander, the presumed dead but now returned husband of Melite, whom Clitophon married while believing his beloved Leucippe to be dead. Thersander lives up to the violence of his name in the conduct of his prosecution, wherein he attacks not only Clitophon but also the priest of Artemis who is sheltering Leucippe. The priest, however, proves more than a match for Thersander. Our narrator tells us that the priest “was not at all unskilled in oratory, and especially emulated the comedy of Aristophanes” (ἦν δὲ εἰπεῖν οὐκ ἀδύνατος, μάλιστα δὲ τὴν Ἀριστοφάνους ἐξηλακῶς κωμῳδίαν, 8.9.1). In a speech whose performance Clitophon characterizes as both urbane and comic (ἀστείως καὶ κωμῳδικῶς) the priest employs double entendre to accuse Thersander of such homosexual profligacy in his youth as to amount to prostitution.⁶⁶

At the end of antiquity, we hear a couple more echoes of Aristophanes in newer prose forms. A fifth or even early sixth century AD collection of *Erotic Letters*, attributed to Aristainetus, depicts the marital troubles of two pairs in

65 Bowie (2007) 42; and cf. Smith (2014) 327.

66 Brethes suggests this reference to Aristophanes could be considered “une provocation du romancier d’Alexandrie, dirigée contre l’influence du comique aimable de Ménandre dans le genre romanesque” (“a challenge by the Alexandrian novelist, directed against the influence of the pleasant comedy of Menander in the romance genre”) (Brethes (2007) 23). The intriguing study of Smith suggests a broader pattern of Aristophanic influence in pederastic subplots of the novels, where “the Aristophanic voice of Old Comedy bursts in to ridicule excessive homosexual behavior, either that of boys who are promiscuous in their relations with men or, in the case of Longus’ Gnatho, that of men who are immoderate in their sexual appetite for boys” (Smith (2014) 345). In an early passage in Chariton’s *Chaereas and Callirhoe* (1.11.6), the villain Theron complains about Athenian πολυπραγμοσύνη, a theme familiar from Aristophanes and other poets of Old Comedy, but also from Thucydides (see Smith (2007) 62–3). Criboire suggests that in later antiquity Aristophanes appealed to those with a “taste for invective,” such as the orator Libanius (who at the age of 20 was reading *Acharnians* when he was struck by lightning, an incident that became foundational for his career, *Oration* 1.9–10) (Criboire (2013) 119).

situations reminiscent of the unhappily married Strepsiades in Aristophanes' *Clouds*.⁶⁷ While a couple of allusions had been noted before, the recent work of Emilia Barbiero has shown not only how dependent *Letters* 2.3 and 2.12 are on Aristophanes, but also how well the two letters worked together in the collection for the reader. Aristainetus plays variations on the story: in *Letter* 2.12 the rich Euboulides has married a poor wife (inverting the social situation of the poor Strepsiades and his rich wife in *Clouds*), but she looks to bankrupt him just as effectively, and he threatens to expel her from the house in a line that echoes Strepsiades to his profligate son Pheidippides. *Letter* 2.3 features a young and poor wife married to a controlling older husband, conveniently named Strepsiades. A brief summary cannot do justice to Barbiero's analysis, but she draws one conclusion worth emphasizing: the intertextual relation of the *Letters* with Aristophanes "increases the likelihood that the author is familiar with [*Clouds*] in its entirety, not just the protagonist's monologue at the beginning..."⁶⁸ As antiquity flows on into the Byzantine age, Aristophanes is still in a creative dialogue with other literary forms, not just a historical source and model of correct Attic usage.

The story of Aristophanes' reputation and reception in antiquity after his lifetime is not what the performer or theatre historian might wish for—but neither is the story of classical tragedy and comedy as a whole once we reach the age of Empire. The epigraphical record shows that festivals in the Greek east staged both new and revived scripts of comedy and tragedy into the imperial age, but details of these performances are frustratingly lacking, and there is no evidence for Aristophanes ever reclaiming the stage.⁶⁹ Private, recital-style performances may have persisted in private somewhat longer, but different kinds of entertainment took over the theatres. As Walter Kerr has pointed out, in a book that still more than repays reading:

67 See the newly translated and annotated text of Bing and Höschle (2013) (and on the date, especially xiii–xvi).

68 Barbiero (2015) 46. I am most grateful to Dr. Barbiero for sharing her article with me in proofs before its publication.

69 One second-century AD inscription from Aphrodisias in Caria records provisions for a competition in ἀρχαία κωμῳδία (MAMA VIII 420; translation in Csapo and Slater (1995) 191–2, no. 159B) rather than the standard term for previously produced comedy, παλαιὰ κωμῳδία, but no details of poets are given. If ἀρχαία is really a generic designation here, this might be evidence for experiments in reviving Old Comedy on stage amidst the growing interest in the literature and culture of the classical age: see Jones (1993) 46–8; and Peterson (2015) 185–6.

So far as we know, comedy never has come first. It is something like the royal twin that is born five minutes later, astonishing everyone and deeply threatening the orderly succession of the house . . . comedy is tragedy's private diary. It records what may have been concealed, and quite properly concealed, while we were trying so desperately to maintain a social relationship with the gods.⁷⁰

Comedy as a whole lived off the energy and cultural capital of tragedy for a couple centuries more on stage after the tragic canon closed. Then Aristophanes and his fellow Old Comedians, along with Menander and all of New Comedy, had to rely on other venues and other cultural forces for their survival. If we venture the thought experiment of what would have happened to Aristophanes, had a number of his plays not so brilliantly parodied Euripides (and Aeschylus in *Frogs*), or had he not even more famously attacked Socrates in *Clouds*, the results might give us pause: without those connections to the interests of later readers, he might not have been lucky enough to have perhaps a quarter of all the plays he ever wrote survive, a much higher percentage than any of those tragedians. Was that luck, or was that genius? Perhaps we should let King Charles in the 1970s musical *Pippin* answer that:

It's smarter to be lucky
than it's lucky to be smart.

70 Kerr (1967) 20, 26.

Modern Theory and Aristophanes

Charles Platter

As Bakhtin says, only the Biblical Adam, that legendary namer of things, could ever know the beginning of a discourse. So it is also with accounts of literary theory. Posit a source for theoretical approaches to Aristophanes, and predecessors come out of the woodwork, from Cratinus to Aristotle and Freud to Foucault. Moreover, if we believe that reading is never wholly innocent, and that, consequently, our encounters with Aristophanes are importantly affected by presuppositions, strategies, and biases that illuminate certain aspects of the text while obscuring others, we may also believe that there are no non-theoretical approaches to Aristophanes at all.¹

The previous observation about theory links it inextricably with reception studies. Just as each reading/viewing of an artifact or a performance is informed by the theoretical presuppositions of its consumers, so also each encounter (including the experience of subsequent readings/viewings) is a species of reception. In this sense we could say that the general task of theory in any historically-determined episteme is to formulate a model sufficiently broad so as to organize the range of its reception. At the same, time, however, the determination to undertake such a project (and the specific form that it takes) is itself a type of reception study and like all studies is part of a chain of interpretation and re-interpretation.²

In accordance with this understanding of theory as a species of reception studies, it is not surprising that the range of issues and methodologies perceived as relevant to Aristophanes has substantially changed over the last generation, in part as a result of the introduction of methodologies borrowed

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- 1 If this is true, then a full treatment of the theoretical reception of Aristophanic comedy will have to be coextensive with the complete history of Aristophanic scholarship. We await the appearance of that mighty volume. The more modest goal of this essay is to discuss works about Aristophanes that explicitly engage theory. For a recent survey of both theoretical and “non-theoretical” approaches to Aristophanes, see Dobrov (2010).
 - 2 It is thus fundamentally dynamic and unstable. Konstan (2014) argues that this notion extends from texts to genres themselves and emphasizes the degree to which ideas about genres are historically constructed and understood up against the ever-changing genres that help to define it.

from other humanities and social sciences disciplines.³ The purpose of this essay is to offer a selection of these approaches which have been applied to the understanding of Aristophanes. It cannot hope to be exhaustive, given the many and varied approaches that have appeared.⁴ The following sections nevertheless testify to the degree to which theory has emerged in recent years with questions that have added new dimensions to discussions of Aristophanes and Old Comedy.

I add a couple of caveats. Since literary theory does not refer to a single methodology but to an ensemble, its collective influence on Aristophanic scholarship will not be monolithic. Further, one consequence of the late emergence of theoretical methodologies in scholarship on Aristophanes is that many of the authors I will mention are admittedly *bricoleurs* with respect to their practices.⁵ Scholars interested in the ritual basis of Old Comedy may combine a familiarity with Bakhtinian carnival culture with anthropological studies of ritual. Others may use intertextuality or performance criticism as tools to articulate what is primarily a feminist thesis. Thus, the theoretical rubrics I use to organize the material below also create distortions which I try to correct only on the fly. Finally, I cannot make any claims for comprehensiveness. The explo-

3 That new methodologies have become attractive is itself symptomatic of the perception that important aspects of text, performance, and reception were unaddressed by theoretical models grounded in a positivist philology (e.g., political allegory, *roman à clef*).

4 There is no official date for the beginnings of theory in classics, but the foundation of *Arethusa* in 1967 gives a convenient starting point. Significant collections from the period and beyond attest to interest in new methodologies—e.g., Kresic (1981) and Foley (1981). Similarly, the foundation of theory-friendly journals *Ramus* (1972), *Helios* (1976), and *Materiali e Discussioni* (1978) signaled an openness to new approaches. There was also some resistance, most famously the editorial statement of new editorial board of *The American Journal of Philology*, which asserted that “the use of innovative methods is, in itself, not sufficient reason for publication” (as if anyone ever thought it was) (*AJP* (1987) vii–ix). For more on this, see Konstan (1999). Even in the early nineties I was surprised to discover that organizing a panel on Bakhtin at the annual meeting of the Classical Association of the Middle-West and South could still generate incredulity from the after-dinner speaker at the banquet. For contrasting opinions on the usefulness of literary theory for classical texts, see the essays of Rubino (2005) and Willett (2005). More recent works have acknowledged the need to take stock and move forward. See, for example, the works of de Jong and Sullivan (1994), Schmitz (2007), Heath (2002), and Hitchcock (2008).

5 This is due, I think, to the fact that learning to write about literature is in part the search for a vocabulary that will allow the writer to give a shape to his or her observations about a text, a phenomenon, or a period. Discovery of such an approach, in turn, may uncover other contiguous modes of thought that may help to explicate corners of the text not sufficiently illuminated by the first.

sion of literary theory in classical studies generally and for Aristophanes specifically, precludes this.⁶ In addition, essays such as this one are inevitably a mirror of the reading habits and fallible memory of their authors, and there is no doubt that I miss—or have not fully digested—much that is both relevant and worthy. Nevertheless, readers who follow what I have included will also be led to additional important bibliography.

Feminism

Given that the evidence of classical antiquity—in particular the literary evidence—was produced originally by and for men, one of the great tasks of feminist work was to make women visible. Determining to do so also meant contravening traditional historical preferences for military and political history in order to put greater focus on social institutions and the roles played by women in the οἶκος (“house”).⁷ Theater in general, and Aristophanic comedy in particular, figured prominently in this effort. Although these texts, too, seem to have been composed for an audience figured as male, the persistent representation of women on stage made them attractive targets for attempting to understand how the particular representations of women figured into a coherent conception of (male) self and (female) other.

It is not too much to say that feminist reception of Aristophanes has contributed more to the climate of acceptance for theoretical approaches to Aristophanes than any other single style of interpretation. The time was clearly right for a broadening of approaches after the important work of Whitman (1964), Dover’s revolutionary commentary on *Clouds* (1968), and the first edition of Henderson’s *The Maculate Muse* (1975), but feminist scholars took the lead in shaping the form it would take.⁸ An emergent approach to this issue had already been suggested by the structuralist-inflected work of

6 Moreover, I will use “theory” here in a very restricted sense as referring to the authors that populate books like those of Eagleton (2008) and Castle (2007). As Heath points out, such a usage “tends to foreclose theoretical reflection by tacitly excluding whatever falls outside the favored range” (Heath (2002) 18). Nevertheless, the full range of possible theoretical reflection is beyond the scope of this chapter. For some interesting suggestions on fruitful sources for further study beyond the usual suspects, see Heath (2002) 143–50; and Ruffell (2011).

7 A pioneering study of this sort was Pomeroy (1975). See also the remarks of Foley (1981a) xi.

8 See also Keuls (1985); and Henry (1985). An additional result of their work has been the presence of a feminist dimension (if unacknowledged) in subsequent works oriented altogether differently. See also the remarks of Skinner and Vivante on “the purging of feminism from subsequent waves of scholarly thought” (Skinner and Vivante (2004) 604).

Jean-Pierre Vernant and Marcel Detienne, which saw the male-female dichotomy that is expressed in Greek literature (and theater) as analogous to the division between nature and culture.⁹ Essays by Rosellini (1979) and Said (1979) addressed male-female dynamics from the perspective of *Lysistrata* and *Ecclesiazusae*, respectively.¹⁰ Two essays on women and theater by Helene Foley make use of the structuralist distinction but go beyond it. Foley contests the notion that gender relations in comedy can be understood simply in terms of women who feel compelled to leave their home turf within the οἶκος and “intrude” into the masculine world of the πόλις (“city”), arguing instead that these domains are interpenetrated and homologous. Thus, of *Lysistrata* she writes that,

women . . . have not truly crossed from their enclosed domestic world into an unconfined public one but have conducted their intrusion still metaphorically contained by the boundaries of and values proper to respectable women. At the same time, the image of the agora and acropolis as enlarged domestic spheres also suggests that these public spaces do not belong exclusively to men and that Athens itself can be appropriately envisioned as an enlarged oikos in which both men and women have their separate but important functions.¹¹

Foley uses the partial opposition of male and female spheres of action to get at tensions at the heart of Greek thinking about οἶκος and πόλις. Thus, in the symbolic sense, it is a project in making women visible. At the same time, she reveals the tensions as formulated by and for the consideration of men.¹² Froma Zeitlin's early work on Aristophanes also describes the symbolic systems that make use of the feminine to elucidate the complex and often unbalanced approach to mimesis that occurs in the theater, from both gendered and non-gendered perspectives.¹³

9 For references to the work of Vernant and Detienne, see Foley (1981b) 166. Carson (1990) updates and convincingly contextualizes the schematic quality that characterizes representations of women in antiquity.

10 See also Loraux (1981).

11 Foley (1982) 7.

12 For a contextualization of the position of Foley and others, see Richlin (1993). See now Foley (2014).

13 Zeitlin (1981); and Zeitlin (1985), a book primarily about tragedy, but nevertheless important for thinking about the feminine in Aristophanes. Zeitlin (1996) collects both essays and includes a retrospective introduction.

Some feminist scholarship on Aristophanes has focused on the objectification of women within Aristophanic comedy and the degree to which representations are produced in a way oriented toward a male gaze.¹⁴ Taaffe offers one approach via film criticism, which she maintains can help to uncover aspects of Aristophanic women that are not otherwise foregrounded:

While the spectator's gaze in a theatrical performance cannot be manipulated as forcefully as it is in film, it is still grounded in cultural assumptions about gender, sexuality, and power. The spectator's gaze is manipulated by specific aspects of any theatrical performance (set, props, costume, blocking, choreography, and the actors themselves) that are aimed, by the director and perhaps the author, at a particular type of spectator.¹⁵

Taaffe's model for looking at women in Aristophanes is grounded upon a conception of theatricality more detailed than the one we possess. At the same time, she argues that we can compensate for this deficiency in part by inserting ourselves into the analysis as "denaturalized" spectators.¹⁶ Such an emphasis on theatricality has one particularly important consequence. It sensitizes us to the metatheatrical dimensions of Aristophanic comedy, particularly as it pertains to the representation of women by male actors and the degree to which this fact can become a part of the audience's viewing experience.¹⁷ We may well feel differently, for example, about Aristophanes' revolutionary women of the *Lysistrata* or the *Ecclesiazusae* if we feel that gender impersonation (as well as the use of stereotypes) limits the transformative potential of the women's actions so as "to reaffirm the male power base of Athenian society."¹⁸ There is much to recommend in Taaffe's model. In one silly bit of physical comedy in the *Ecclesiazusae* (lines 95–7), Praxagora admonishes her co-conspirators that if they are to maintain successfully their male disguises in the assembly it will be necessary for them to arrive early and cover up completely:

οὐκοῦν καλὰ γ' ἂν πάθοιμεν, εἰ πλήρης τύχοι
ὁ δῆμος ὧν κἄπειθ' ὑπερβαίνουσά τις
ἀναβαλλομένη δείξειε τὸν Φορμίσιον

14 Henry argues that this attitude was characteristic of Old Comedy as a whole (Henry (1985) 13–31).

15 Taaffe (1993) 17.

16 Taaffe (1993) 18.

17 References to metatheatricality also appear in this essay under the headings of "Intertextuality" and "Performance Criticism."

18 Taaffe (1993) 133.

Why it would be a fine thing for us, if the Assembly was already full, and then one of us was climbing over them, lifted up her clothes and revealed her real Phorm . . . isius.¹⁹

On the one hand, Praxagora's comment points to the limits of gender mimesis, as the careful disguise of the women is always threatened to be undermined by exposure of her true (female) genitalia (represented euphemistically by the name of the hairy politician). In practice, however, it is clear to Athenian spectators—and perhaps a surprise to us “denaturalized” ones—that the deception never gets off the ground. If the line is delivered with the exaggerated pantomime that it merits, the female character in disguise and eager to avoid being recognized as biologically female displays herself to show not the truth of her sex but to re-accentuate the fact that s/he has been male all along with a phallic display for all to see. Thus, by imagining the double gaze of the audience in this short scene, we can see how Aristophanes manipulates the idea of the feminine to situate his complex comic effects within narratives that are fundamentally nonthreatening.

In her analysis of mute nude females, Zweig argues that Aristophanic (Old) comedy is pornographic, not from the perspective of an audience that is titillated sexually at the experience of it but as a form of representation distinguished by its effects:²⁰ the objectivation and subordination of women.²¹ In this respect Zweig and Taaffe have important points in common, as both make use

19 The text and translation are those of Sommerstein (1998). Phormisius was an Athenian politician known for his hairiness, to judge from *Frogs* 965. The comic phalluses of the women (not the penises of the men who portray them) presumably coexist with their female pubic hair. The actor who plays Kalonike in *Lysistrata* appears to wear a body stocking with a triangular representation of pubic hair prominently displayed (88–9). For body stockings on actors, see Green (2010). See also the references to the pubic hair of the slave girl at *Wasps* 1374–5.

20 The possibility of titillation is not altogether excluded, however. Zweig considers plausible Wilamowitz's suggestion that these roles were played not by male actors in drag but by courtesans (Zweig (1992) 78–80). The argument has not found favor, mostly because of the lack of positive evidence for the practice. Nevertheless, as Zweig notes, many of the counter-arguments are no better supported.

21 The same can be said for many Aristophanic speaking women as well. At lines 731–815, the daughters of the Megarian in *Acharnians* are presented on stage as χοῖραι (“piglets,” but also slang for the female genitalia). Admittedly, their lines are limited to onomatopoeitic pig noises, but their objectification as χοῖραι is striking, in that it doubly dehumanizes them: through synecdoche by rebranding them as their own reproductive organs and through metonymy by identifying them as sub-human (“piglets”). See also the objectification of Lampito and Kalonike at *Lysistrata* 77–92. Gilhully also discusses women as animals, as part of comedy's strategy for containing unruly women (Gilhully (2009) 169–76).

of the idea of who looks at what as crucial for establishing the power dynamics inherent in a work of representation, and both conclude that Aristophanic comedy is less revolutionary in its gender politics than is sometimes assumed.

Politics and Ideology

Aristophanic comedy reminds us frequently of its own importance as a political force. The author himself is frequently styled as διδάσκαλος (“teacher”) as well, thus putting comedy squarely in line with assumptions about the didactic basis of Greek poetry. Moreover, as early as *Acharnians*, Aristophanes’ first extant play, Dikaiopolis maintains that “τρυγῶδία [‘comedy’] knows justice too.”²² *Acharnians*, *Peace*, and *Lysistrata* all seem to be advocating an end to the Peloponnesian War. In *Clouds* the chorus upbraids the audience for reelecting Cleon as general, and the final contest of *Frogs* has the comic Dionysus asking Euripides and Aeschylus their opinions on how best to deal with Alcibiades.

These references and others have generated much discussion about the political orientation of Aristophanic comedy, particularly in view of the fact that harsh criticism of Cleon figures so prominently in the plays. Responses, nevertheless, have been diverse. Some have affirmed the serious political content of comedy, although they have characterized it differently. De Ste. Croix saw Aristophanes as favoring the interests of the upper classes.²³ For Heath, Aristophanes expresses more sympathy for the common man and the demos, at the expense of those who have been corrupted by wealth.²⁴ Moreover, he argues that comedy is political only in the restricted sense that political life provides the material of comedy, but one “without designs on the political life from which it departed.”²⁵ Still others have understood Aristophanes as deeply committed to the Athenian democracy.²⁶ Some scholars have failed to detect any serious positive politics in Aristophanes’ plays at all.²⁷ The present state of the debate is well discussed by Olson, who himself sees Aristophanes’

For a critical survey of feminist responses to pornography and classical literature generally, see Richlin (1992 and 1993).

22 For the programmatic status of the word τρυγῶδία, see Taplin (1983).

23 De Ste. Croix (1972) 355–71.

24 Heath (1987) 40, 29–38. See also Heath (1997).

25 Heath (1987) 42.

26 See, for example, Henderson (1990) and Sidwell (2009a).

27 Gomme (1938).

shifting political pronouncements as reliant on “the willingness of the people to excuse themselves individually from responsibility for any communal actions or decisions that turned out badly.”²⁸

I now turn to several interrelated theoretical models for understanding the ideology of Aristophanic comedy. All understand ideology not as a proscriptive set of propositions (e.g., fascist ideology, communist ideology) but as the full range of material and imaginary relations a subject has at her disposal. Ideological analysis in this sense takes on the larger goal of attempting to account for complex webs of forces that create persuasive self-images to individual subjects and so function as a drag on social change.

One such model is represented well by David Konstan’s book *Greek Comedy and Ideology* (1995). Konstan is relatively uninterested in the intent of the historical Aristophanes. Instead, following the lead of Marxist theorists like Frederic Jameson he sees literary texts as particularly sensitive indicators for ideas about dominance and power that may not rise to the level of explicit statements.²⁹ Despite a text’s silence on the literal level, there may nevertheless be places where the ideological representation of a society has difficulty molding everything into a coherent whole:

Where society is riven by tensions and inequalities of class, gender, and status, its ideology will be complex and unstable, and literary texts will betray signs of the strain involved in forging such refractory materials into a unified composition.³⁰

Konstan thus argues that playwrights like Aristophanes produce humor not by expressing their personal opinions but “by playing off accepted attitudes and

28 Olson (2010) 69. See also Heath (1987) 9–12. Platter (2013) argues that Plato’s presumed familiarity with comic representations of Socrates’ politics (by both Aristophanes and his rivals) makes it unlikely that the representation of Socrates in *Clouds* could have been taken seriously. For a fascinating study of British responses to Aristophanes from the late eighteenth century to today, see Walsh (2009).

29 Konstan (1995). See for example Jameson (1982) 17–102. This sort of symptomological reading is not limited to Marxism, or course. For a more formalistic version coming out of the tradition of semiotics, see Riffaterre (1983). From a Lacanian (psychoanalytical/structuralist) approach the symptom marks the pressure of the Real against the mediations offered by the (libidinal) Imaginary and the (social) Symbolic. For excellent discussions of Lacan within the context of classics, see Janan (1994) and Miller (2004).

30 Konstan (1995) 5.

recognized social roles, reconstructing or rearranging them in order to bring out absurdities and expose unwarranted pretensions.³¹

The ideological vision of Aristophanes' world is not limited to questions of economic status and political affinity. Thus, an important contribution has been Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* (1978–86, in English translation), with its emphasis on a range of sexual practices and social identities tolerated, encouraged, and constrained throughout the intricate power relationships in the classical world.³² This sort of orientation has often given Foucault-inflected classical scholarship a sociological orientation, in which the work of Aristophanes occupies a position within the range of socio-political attitudes and institutions that existed in fifth-century Athens.³³ This makes for readings of Aristophanes that emphasize the normative aspects of his work.³⁴ Thus, for example, Wohl's fascinating and theoretically well-informed *Love Among the Ruins* shows how Aristophanes' portrayal of Cleon can be understood as a send-up of the Periclean ideal of erotically engaged citizenship in fifth-century Athens.³⁵

A third influential sociological model that has been influential in the scholarship of Aristophanes is derived from the work of Pierre Bourdieu, known for his analyses of the relationship between taste and social status (or aspirational social status):

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- 31 Konstan (1995) 6. In this sense, then, the presumptive difference in quality between comic poets corresponds to the ability of each to channel the social contradictions of Athenian society into amusing analogues.
 - 32 For an appraisal of Foucault's project from the perspective of classics, see Larmour, Miller, and Platter, eds. (1998). Some feminist critics have seen *The History of Sexuality* as effacing the experience of women by representing real lives as contingent and constructed. See, for example Richlin (1998). For other views see Sawicki (1991) and Goldhill (1995).
 - 33 For a counter-example, however, see McClure (1999) 205–59. McClure's analysis of gendered obscenity in *Lysistrata* and *Ecclesiazusae*, which could easily have been discussed in the context of feminist approaches, takes important cues from Foucault. She argues that Aristophanes' use of obscenity in these plays is one of the factors that helps to affirm the essentially masculine perspective from which the plays are written. See also Taaffe (1993).
 - 34 Ruffell, by contrast, argues that by encountering Aristophanes' use of impossible worlds and complex fictive situations, audiences are "exploring ideological and political positions and constantly evaluating the plausibility and implausibility of associations and proposition from within the system" (Ruffell (2011) 429).
 - 35 Wohl (2002) 73–123.

In fact, through the economic and social conditions which they presuppose, the different ways of relating to realities and fictions, of believing in fictions and the realities they simulate, with more or less distance and detachment, are very closely linked to the different possible positions in social space and, consequently, bound up with the systems of dispositions (*habitus*) characteristic of the different classes and class fractions. Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier.³⁶

Closely connected with the aesthetic enjoyment of objects and the types of status they connote are issues concerned with the body and its presentation. Thus, Nancy Worman's study of the "abusive mouths" quotes Bourdieu for the idea that "domesticated language . . . proscribes 'gross' remarks 'coarse' jokes, and 'thick' accents" so as to exclude "all excessive manifestations of appetites or feelings":

The interaction of the body and language thus pervades the metaphorical register that distinguishes "high" from "low" language, especially aspects of class status and gender identity that serve to elevate or undermine one's authority. Similarly, in Aristophanes . . . clamorous hucksters in the agora exhibit "coarse" (*miaros*) speaking styles, while effeminate loungers at symposia tend to be glib and "soft" (*malakos*).³⁷

The symbolic importance of the mouth is central, and she concludes that "The mouth initiates a cluster of metonymies and metaphors for political activities, the consumption of food, drink, and/or sex forging the common register for articulating differences in social and political styles."³⁸

Matthew Wright's work on Aristophanes also makes important use of Bourdieu in addressing the issue of the Aristophanic competitive environment, which he sees as reflecting the tensions of an "anti-prize" culture that questions the values and systems of judgment in place for adjudication and a "pro-prize" mentality expressed by some literary testimonia and occasional

36 Bourdieu (1984) 5–6.

37 Worman (2008) 15. For the link between comedy in general and taste in Bourdieu's sense, see Friedman (2014); and Claessens and Dhoest (2010).

38 Worman (2008) 17. This focus on the body and its symbolic functions also connects her work to Bakhtin on the carnivalized body. See Worman (2008) 62–120, especially 68–71 and below.

references in the plays.³⁹ These mentalities, in turn, are keyed to social status, with the “pro-prize” mentality being characteristic of those who view art as a kind of commodity and those who value it in symbolic terms primarily (i.e., the prize itself is not as important as the cultural capital earned by the producer).⁴⁰ Viewed in these terms, complaints like those expressed in the parabasis of *Clouds*, a reworking of the original play, begin to look different. The voice of the parabasis complains about the bad judging that allowed the original play, his “cleverest comedy,” to be ranked third in a field of three, and about vulgar men who had the bad taste to bring on stage low-life objects of ridicule, from comic phalluses to drunken old women. Scholars have tended to understand such passages as either the authentic voice of the historical poet complaining about his treatment or as ironic exaggeration, and, indeed, nothing in Wright’s argument necessarily excludes such conclusions. At the same time, such a statement may have more to say about aesthetic affinities expressed by the parabasis than it does about the characteristics of Aristophanes’ rivals and their plays. This is especially so in view of another statement from the same parabasis that recalls the good judgement of the men “whose names it is sweet to mention” (528–9)—i.e., those (whoever they are) whose elite tastes predispose them to reject the vulgarity of Aristophanes’ rivals. Thus, on Wright’s reading, the argument about what happened when *Clouds* was performed is also a statement about class that classifies the classifier.⁴¹

Bakhtin

Although the bulk of Mikhail Bakhtin’s work was composed between 1929 (the publication of the first version of *Problems in Dostoevsky’s Poetics*), and 1950 (the date of the manuscript of the text that would become *Rabelais and His World*), it was largely unknown in the West until it began to be popularized in France by Julia Kristeva in the mid-1970s and became an important subject of

39 See Wright (2012) 41–6, who is aware of the difficulty in interpreting the tone of such references.

40 See Wright on Bourdieu’s notion of commodification in art: “The whole ‘field of cultural production’ is seen as being internally divided between the sub-field of *extended* or large-scale production (which caters to the masses with their relatively conventional tastes) and the sub-field of *restricted* or small-scale production (which caters for the elite and intellectuals—a self-perpetuating and self-legitimizing group)” (Wright (2012) 38).

41 See also the remarks of Revermann ((2006a) 22), who contrasts this aspect of Old Comedy before the emergence of the drama industry; and Csapo (2004).

scholarly examination soon thereafter.⁴² For scholars of Aristophanes, it was Bakhtin's work on carnival that attracted much interest, since it seemed to offer a sociological model for understanding the prominence of bodily functions and the mass of scatological and obscene material in Old Comedy that existed alongside its (arguably more elevated) literary and satiric elements.⁴³ Moreover, it was a model with a history reaching from Rabelais back into the preliterate past, and therefore a useful comparandum to bolster the fragmentary evidence we possess about the beginnings of Greek comedy.⁴⁴ In Bakhtin's view carnival represents a ludic moment when the voice of the subjugated classes temporarily overturns the power relations normally in place by bringing together elements of the sacred and the profane that are normally separate in the everyday world. The combination of the two produces a dynamic spirit of egalitarianism, however, with the profane and the bodily overturning all that is normally powerful or wise through the power of mockery.⁴⁵ Bakhtin sees there "a whole system of carnivalistic debasings and bringings down to earth, carnivalistic obscenities linked with the reproductive powers of the earth and the body, carnivalistic parodies on sacred texts and sayings, etc."⁴⁶

Jean-Claude Carrière (1978) and Wolfgang Rösler (1981) were among the first to read Aristophanes in Bakhtinian terms. Both see Aristophanic comedy as very much a part of the tradition of "grotesque realism."⁴⁷ Goldhill, however, emphasizes the degree to which the Athenian democracy of the fifth-century BC, in which a comic hero like Dikaiopolis in *Acharnians* can assert that he is no beggar but a *πολίτης χρηστός* ("useful citizen"), fully capable of and engaging in civic deliberations, is a bad fit for Bakhtin's model of carnival as an oppositional discourse.⁴⁸

42 Kristeva (1974). For another early adopter see also Todorov (1984).

43 See Hesk (2000).

44 Bakhtin is not always consistent in his use of the carnival. Sometimes it clearly designates an anthropological phenomenon. Other times it seems primarily a metaphor. For a discussion of the problem, see Platter (2001) 57–9; and Platter (2007) 6–9.

45 Rosen (2014b) argues that Bakhtin's focus on carnival liberation causes him to underemphasize the "heroic" figure (as Aristophanic parabases often remind us) of the satirical poet.

46 Bakhtin (1984) 123.

47 They have now been augmented by Moellendorff (1995), who sees carnival as central to all of Bakhtin's work.

48 Goldhill (1991) 176–87. *Χρηστός* is a loaded term in comedy, as Neil (1911) pointed out. It is essentially the term used by the upper classes to distinguish themselves from their rivals, the *πονηροί* ("worthless men"). Thus, while Goldhill styles Dikaiopolis' self-assertion an appeal to a collective ideal where everyone is welcome to comment, it is also possible to

Edwards (1993, revised 2002) and Platter (1993), while acknowledging the apparent kinship between Bakhtin's model and Old Comedy, both emphasize the degree to which Bakhtin minimizes the connection.⁴⁹ Edwards argues that this omission is not accidental. Like Goldhill he sees an important difference between carnival as an oppositional discourse and the institutional context of fifth-century comedy. Unlike Goldhill, however, who sees Aristophanes largely in harmony with the Athenian democracy, Edwards sees him as essentially a conservative figure along the lines proposed by de Ste. Croix. His thesis maintains, then, that Bakhtin's history of "carnival laughter" systematically undervalues the contributions of Aristophanes because Bakhtin himself saw an inconsistency between the conservative orientation of Aristophanes and the "progressive" one of Rabelais.⁵⁰ In fact, he goes so far as to argue that the presence of political plays in Aristophanes is itself a symptom of a crisis of the elites, whose power was waning and who clung to it in part by exploiting the resources of the aristocratic poetic tradition.⁵¹

Dobrov shares certain features of Edwards' argument but uses the framework of Bakhtinian dialogism to make an interesting argument regarding the historical development of Old Comedy through Middle Comedy as far as the work of Menander. Working from Plutarch's σύγκρισις ("comparison") of Aristophanes and Menander (*Moralia* 853a–854d), which contrasts the stylistic incongruity and incoherence of Aristophanes with Menander, whose "measured" language (σύμμετρον) always fits the type of speaker it represents, Dobrov sees in the work of Aristophanes a strong sense of dialogism maintained in large part by the intrusive character of the authorial voice free to "ventriloquate" through his stage-figures," as opposed to Menandrian characters who are "linguistically secured as autonomous and stable literary constructs."⁵² It is the reduction, for Dobrov, of Aristophanes' polyphonic narrator and the

see it operating in the context of a style of political discourse that is predicated on socio-political exclusivity. This type of ambivalence is absolutely characteristic of Aristophanes' thoroughgoing dialogism. For a recent work on *Acharnians* that takes into account a Bakhtinian perspective, see de Cremoux (2011).

49 I mention the appearance of Edwards' essay in 1993 as a sign of the times. Citations come from the revised version of the essay that appears in Branham (2002).

50 Edwards (2002) 45. So also Dobrov (1995) 92. De Ste Croix's analysis of Aristophanes' politics seems insufficiently nuanced to account for the many passages that cannot easily be interpreted as expressing conservative politics. Platter argues that Aristophanes appeals to various audiences simultaneously not just to elite ones (Platter (2007) 66–7). See also Revermann (2006b).

51 Edwards (2002) 42–4. This is a fascinating and provocative claim that bears further study.

52 Dobrov (1995) 56. The metaphor of ventriloquism is Aristophanic. See *Wasps* 1019–20.

emergence of language and action brought into conformity with “the probable” that will lead to Aristotle’s formulation of τὸ εἰκός (“the probable”) as an important stylistic consideration.⁵³

Both Edwards and Dobrov are interested using Bakhtin to illuminate aspects of Greek literary history. In *Aristophanes and the Carnival of Genres* (2007) Platter attempts to take another tack. In reading Aristophanic comedy through Bakhtin’s idea of serio-comic literature in antiquity that for him were the precursors of the modern novel, he shifts the focus of analysis from great historical movements to the way the experience of a text (read or performed) varies according to the interaction of various language levels and generic cues.⁵⁴ For Bakhtin, the primary literary distinction is between a text that resists this sort of ambivalence by attempting to preserve uniform style and meaning (monologism) and one that invites dialogism by encouraging stylistic diversity. The generic markers that correspond to these tendencies are epic and novel, although, as the opening quotation of this essay makes clear, to achieve true monologism you might need to rule a desert.⁵⁵

One important consequence of looking closely at stylistic heterogeneity is that, just as in the case of carnival reversals of high and low mentioned above, juxtaposing “high” with “low” deprives “high” of its hierarchical status and in so doing elevates “low.” So also in the case of parody, where “high” tragedy is made a part (and so a lesser part) of “low” comedy. The incongruity so produced deprives tragedy of its traditional dignity and places it on the same plane as comedy. This happens in many ways. In the prologue to *Acharnians*, Dikaiopolis describes himself at a performance: ἑκχίνῃ προσδοκῶν τὸν Αἰσχύλον “I gaped expectantly, waiting for the great Aeschylus” (line 10). On the one hand, he expresses open admiration for Aeschylus. On the other, however, the verb ἑκχίνῃ conjures up all manner of unpleasant associations in Aristophanes, from the council-members in *Knights* who gape idiotically in anticipation of cut-rate anchovies (line 651) to the Socrates whose gaping at the sky allows a lizard to defecate into his mouth (*Clouds* 171–2). Dikaiopolis, apparently, is one of them, and so his characterization negatively affects the reputation

53 Dobrov (1995) 94.

54 Platter (2007) 11–2. For a more complete typology, see Bakhtin (1984) 114–8.

55 “Epic and Novel” is also the title of the first of the essays that makes up *The Dialogic Imagination* (Bakhtin 1981). It should be said, of course, that as the details of oral-formulaic theory have been fine-tuned, it has become progressively more untenable to think of the Homeric poems as themselves monologic. See also Nagy (2002a). At the same time, however, I argue that Aristophanes characterized Homer as (relatively) monologic in several important passages (Platter (2007) 108–42).

of Aeschylus as well.⁵⁶ For this reason it will not do simply to see Aeschylus as the representative of the “good old days” for Aristophanes, in opposition to Euripides, frequently ridiculed as the poet of degenerate modernity. Both poets turn out to have their virtues made relative by their appearance within comedies and the close quarters at which they themselves are forced to coexist.⁵⁷

Intertextuality

As the genre of the scholarly commentary makes quite clear, works from antiquity have a textual complexity that precludes them from being taken at face value. This is all the more true for an author like Aristophanes, whose works exhibit great textual porosity by carrying within themselves the greatest possible array of parodies, allusions, and other borrowings.⁵⁸ Although such textual links have often been under-exploited, attracting little more than “cf.” and a string of citations, many have felt that more could be done. The term intertextuality to describe the permeable nature of texts appears first in the work of Kristeva (1969, 1974), heavily inflected by the language of structuralism and psychoanalysis. It figures prominently in the work of Conte on allusion in Roman poetry for its ability to preserve the foreignness of the allusion in its new location. As Charles Segal writes,

The intertextual basis of literary allusion reflects the precariousness rather than the givenness of history. Literary tradition is not just a smooth, well-oiled groove on which the past slides into the present: it also poses the problem of overcoming the otherness, the nonrelevance, inherent in the past.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Platter (2007) 56–7.

⁵⁷ This pattern of ambivalence is thoroughly characteristic of Aristophanic comedy. I give several examples of the process at work in the interaction of comedy with epic and tragedy, and intratextually with comedy itself in the complex relationship between the second *Clouds* and *Wasps*, both of which respond to the same event, the failure of the first *Clouds* to win.

⁵⁸ Two important works for scholarship should be mentioned here: Taillardat (1965) and Rau (1967). Neither is particularly theoretical, but both are indispensable for looking deeply into the world of Aristophanic intertextuality.

⁵⁹ Segal (1986) 12. See also Hinds (1998) and Edmunds (2000).

Literary tradition as a “groove” means that allusion is essentially unproblematic since both alluding text and text alluded to are part of the same continuum. The scholarship on intertextuality rejects this equivalence and insists on their fundamental asymmetry, which produces a difference that must be interpreted.

Intertextuality has occupied a major place in Aristophanic scholarship in recent years.⁶⁰ One of the earliest and most exciting attempts to apply the insights of intertextuality to Aristophanes is Hubbard (1990). I can only give an example of its richness.⁶¹ Of particular concern to Hubbard is the status of the parabasis, where the chorus speaks about the play itself, the author of the play, and his rivals and enemies. From this skeleton description alone it is clear that the parabasis takes a perspective different from that of any of the other characters of the play, none of whom it interacts with directly. Moreover, it possesses a metatheatrical self-awareness—including a proclivity for self-citation—that is unparalleled elsewhere in comedy.⁶² This feature presents interpretative challenges and opportunities, which have sometimes been ignored. As Hubbard discusses in regard to the parabasis of *Peace*:

One of the most noticeable and problematic features of this parabasis is the almost verbatim repetition of the passage describing Cleon (vv. 751–59) from the parabasis of *Wasps* (*Vesp.* 1029–37). Some scholars regard this as another sign of the play’s hasty composition and imaginative poverty, while others have argued that the *Wasps* passage was interpolated. Our observations concerning the extent and importance of intertextual cross-referencing and self-allusion in Aristophanes . . . ought to warn us that more is at work here than mere rehash. *The decision to repeat a passage*

60 A major factor in stimulating this interest has been the extraordinary efforts to restore something of the competitive atmosphere of fifth-century comedy by focusing on what can be learned from other writers of comedy. Among the important works has been Ruston, et al. (2011); Storey (2003a, 2010, 2011); Harvey and Wilkins (2000); Bakola (2008, 2009, 2014); Telò (2007, 2010b, 2014); Belardinelli, et al. (1998); Pirotta 2009; Orth (2009, 2013, 2014); Bagordo (2013, 2014a, 2014b); Stama (2014); (Olson 2007, 2014a); Pellegrino (2013); and Mancuso (2013).

61 See also Slater and Zimmermann (1993).

62 The most striking example of self-awareness outside the parabasis is the speech of Dikaiopolis to the chorus of Acharnian farmers (366–84). He is dressed as the title character from Euripides’ *Telephus* and carries other props from the play, but speaks from the value center of an aggrieved playwright very much like Aristophanes.

*can be as deliberate and significant on a metalinguistic level of reference as the composition of a completely new utterance.*⁶³

Hubbard goes on to argue that there is a decisive switch from the third-person description of *Wasps* to the more emphatic first-person of *Peace*, which nevertheless expresses a thematic continuity with the earlier play.⁶⁴

Dobrov, too, has addressed the collision between comedy and tragedy in Aristophanes, which he describes as a “contrafact.” The metaphor is borrowed from jazz. First, a piece of music is selected. The melody is then discarded, but the harmonic structure is retained. Finally, a new melody is added to create something that is both old and new.⁶⁵ The contrafact works, then, something like a theme with an extended application. Dobrov discusses in detail the contrafact of Sophocles’ *Tereus*, which is particularly important for the plot of *Birds*, in which Tereus, metamorphosed now into a hoopoe, is a major character.⁶⁶ He considers the full range of the story as it seems to have been presented in Sophocles’ tragedy and places it up against its re-presentation in *Birds*.⁶⁷ He comments that the reworking of Tereus in *Birds* represents “a systematic contrafact of Sophoklean innovation” that “engages the mechanism of metamorphosis that works throughout *Birds* as a poetic program informing the contrafact, that is, a comic poetics of transformation.” All of this is particularly significant for the way that *Birds* portrays the metamorphosis of the chorus, from “a natural community of birds into a self-aware *politeia*.”⁶⁸

Another author whose work has been affected importantly by the problems of intertextuality is Michael Silk, whose wide-ranging work on Aristophanes is virtually impossible to categorize. A detailed reader of texts and sampler of theoretical perspectives, he possesses an unparalleled breadth of literary understanding. Silk, for example, contains an extraordinary chapter offering stylistic commentary on the beginnings of *Wealth*, *Frogs*, and *Acharnians* that shows how the interlarding of comic language with other idiolects (tragic, etc.) produces surprising effects.⁶⁹ His concluding words here highlight the complex

63 Hubbard (1990) 148, emphasis mine.

64 One might argue that the temporal separation of the two plays turns the second into a virtual commentary on the first, although this might just be a variation on Hubbard’s main point.

65 Dobrov (1997) 110–1; and Dobrov (2001) 43–4.

66 Dobrov (2001) 119–25.

67 The Tereus-myth in general will not do. As Tereus makes clear, his costume is directly derived from the one used in Sophocles’ play the previous year (*Birds* 100).

68 Dobrov (2001) 125, 126.

69 Silk (2000) 24–41.

language levels that Aristophanic comedy continually negotiates. In regard to the statement of Dikaiopolis that comedy, too, knows justice (*Acharnians* 500), he writes:

Aristophanes' consciousness of tragedy presupposes a sense of difference between tragedy and his own medium, such that any comic use of tragedy opens up the possibility of new modes of comedy itself. What Aristophanes points us towards, then is not merely an Aristophanic pre-occupation with tragedy, but an Aristophanic interest in new alignments of comedy *vis-à-vis* the 'serious' drama of Euripides and his fellow-tragedians.⁷⁰

Silk's insight into the fragile conditions of genre are important given that the term itself is often used as a stable category to anchor other evaluative statements.⁷¹ Maybe, in fact, the plates are moving beneath our feet. Silk considers whether or not the second version of *Clouds*, which is believed to have never been staged, can even be called a comedy in the traditional sense:

Could it be that Aristophanes (who never much enjoyed producing his own plays) failed to restage this version because, in the end, he was content for it to stay on the page? Now *that* in fifth-century Athens *would* be a *καὶνὴ* ἰδέα... Or, more specifically, that Aristophanes now (plausibly) identifies this play as a 'new mode' in the particular sense of a textual hybrid, a 'serious comedy', a tragicomedy (or a comitragedy)...⁷²

Clearly the circumstances that surround the production and/or non-production of *Clouds* are not typical. Still, Silk's rethinking of the way that tragic parody affects the comic text that appropriates it offers interesting ways of thinking about many Aristophanic plays, and, in particular, about *Thesmophoriazusae*, where the interrelationship of comic and tragic mimesis is center stage.⁷³

Much of Mario Telò's work has been devoted to articulating the complex lines according to which the competitive relations between the poets of Old

⁷⁰ Silk (2000) 41.

⁷¹ See also Silk (2013) 17–9.

⁷² Silk (2013) 38. Silk's formulation is provocative, although at *Clouds* 547 (ἀλλ' αἰ καὶνὰς ἰδέας ἐσφέρων σοφίζομαι) the presence of αἰ ("always") and the aspect of both participle and verb suggest habitual action rather than novelty. For the ambivalence of novelty in Aristophanes, see Wright (2011).

⁷³ See Zeitlin (1981).

Comedy have been structured, particularly those that link Aristophanes with his older rival Cratinus. These analyses are profoundly intertextual. His article, “Embodying the Tragic Father” (2010), is a rich study of the language of pater-nity as it is deployed in *Wasps*, both as a way of articulating the father-son dynamics of the plot and as a way of describing Aristophanic comedy and its relationship to its rivals. This aspect of *Wasps* connects it closely with the revised parabasis of *Clouds*; both discuss the failure of the original *Clouds* and situate it in relationship to the *Wine-Flask* of Cratinus, the play which defeated it. Telò is not the first person to concentrate on the inversion of father-son relations in the play, but his interest in mapping onto them the relations of a writer (Aristophanes) and his progenitor (Cratinus) make this an interesting and challenging application of intertextuality.⁷⁴

Performance Criticism and Reception Studies

Scholarship relating to the performance of Aristophanic comedy has increased sharply during the last generation, thanks in large part to the stimulus of works like those of Taplin (1977, 1978, and 1986). A contributing factor has also been a refinement of the assumptions structuring the field of classical drama studies that has produced an exciting synthesis of performance studies with the traditional areas of philology and archaeology.⁷⁵ Thus, there is also important overlap between the issues raised by scholars of performance culture and other

74 See Slater (2002); Biles (2011) 134–66; and Bakola (2008). Telò (2016) argues that the relationship between Aristophanes and Cratinus is even more comprehensive. For him there is more at stake than a simple change of costume in the dressing scene in *Wasps* (1122–1264) where Philocleon is pressed by his son to give up his rustic τριβων (“worn cloak”) in favor of a more luxurious χλαῖνα (“mantle”). Telò carefully teases out the metaphorical associations of the χλαῖνα until it becomes abundantly clear that it, too, plays a major role in articulating the relationship between Aristophanes and Cratinus.

75 Both Greek and Latin literature have played a role here. Slater (1985) focuses on Plautus but also lays the foundation for his performance-related studies of Aristophanes (Slater (1990), (1993), (1999), and (2002)). More recently, Revermann (2006a) in applying performance criticism to Aristophanes is particularly impressive, as are the rich range of chapters in Hall (2006). See also now Revermann and Wilson (2008). Performance has increased in importance at professional meetings as well. See, for example, Gamel (2002a) on adapting *Thesmophoriazousae*. For a survey of performance issues, see Csapo (2010b) and Hughes (2012). Lada-Richards (1999) considers *Frogs*. Other important collections are McDonald and Walton (2008), Boshier (2012), and Harrison and Liapis (2013).

topics discussed in this chapter.⁷⁶ At the same time, given the range of interests and approaches that have appeared, I can only give a brief and imperfect account of the shape of the field.

Taplin's "synkrisis" (1986) emphasizes the self-referential character of Aristophanic comedy and highlights the role that metatheatrical plays, in contrast to tragedy's relative exclusion of these effects.⁷⁷ His comments on parody are equally incisive and practical, pointing at a dimension of comic performance that must have been well-signaled to audiences but is largely invisible to us: "I suspect that a single gesture or a single syllable was often sufficient to indicate paratragedy."⁷⁸ Thus, paratragedy will not simply have been pitched simply at highly literate spectators, as is sometimes assumed, nor will audiences have been a homogenous lot.⁷⁹

Reception theory itself is an important development of classical studies that has appeared in the last generation. In classics a defining moment in reception studies is the work of Charles Martindale for whom the reading of classical texts has never been a pure encounter with antiquity but an encounter filtered through the historically conditioned sensibilities of its readers.⁸⁰ Such a statement has immediate application to performance issues as well, for the performance of a play likewise does not take place at any time but at a distinct historical moment. Nor are the resources (translations, venues, presence of absence of masks, financial support, etc.) at the disposal of producers, directors, and actors always the same, nor do their interests and anxieties make them equally likely to take on the same play (or adaptation) at every period in time.⁸¹ In addition to attempting to understand the social and material constraints that condition how, what, and what sorts of performances appear at any given moment, reception theory strives to understand the intellectual filiations that create the conditions of performance. Edith Hall traces several

76 See, for example, Taaffe (1993), discussed above.

77 The subject is developed in a different direction in Taplin (1993) 67–88. Dobrov (2001) 14–53 extends some of the features of metatheatricality to tragedy as well. See also Ruffell (2011) 214–60 for an interesting discussion of self-referentiality within the comic "metaverse."

78 Taplin (1986) 170.

79 The complexities of imagining the comic audience have been studied recently from a variety of perspectives. See, for example, Slater (1999); Rehm (2007); Roselli (2011) in particular 63–86; and Ruffell (2011) 261–313.

80 See Martindale (2006) 6; and Martindale (1993). It thus is importantly an aspect of ideological analysis. As Whitmarsh writes, "Reception is thus a historicist operation insofar as it exposes the secret history of ideological complicities" (Whitmarsh (2006) 105).

81 The analysis of modern Greek productions of Aristophanes in Van Steen (2000) makes this point clearly, as do Hall and Wrigley (2007), Hall and Harrop (2010), and Klein (2014).

lines of influence, from philosophical and social thought, to the ways that we preserve memorable performances, and to the practices of critics and artists like Eric Bentley, Joseph Chaikan, and others.⁸²

A final aspect of performance culture takes its lead from anthropological theory but also makes use of literary scholarship, literary, and linguistic theory to develop a powerful way for recovering the ritual dimension of the chorus in Old Comedy. Whether or not Aristotle is correct that comedy *developed out of* the rudimentary dramatic situation represented by “those leading the phallic processions” (*Poetics* 1449a11), Bierl is certainly correct to identify the choral song and dancing as primarily ritual and performative.⁸³ The mention of performance, in turn, implies the social world that is not fossilized but continually under negotiation.⁸⁴ The chorus is the key player in that regard, dancing and singing on the interface between dramatic characters and audience.⁸⁵ For Bierl, the chorus “brings together all the contradictory components of this multimedia experience and focuses them upon themselves.”⁸⁶

Conclusion

Theoretical work has many important insights for the appreciation of Aristophanes. It is unfortunate that relatively few connections are made by theorists themselves. Part of the reason for this is due, no doubt, to the difficulties that confront readers of ancient comedy: the relentless topicality expressed

82 Hall (2004).

83 Bierl (2009) 6–7. If Aristotle is right, of course, it adds another metatheatrical dimension to the phallic procession staged by Dikaiopolis at *Acharnians* 241–79. Olson implies some doubt that this scene has much to say about comic origins (Olson (2002) 141). Its connection to ritual, however, is obvious. Bowie (1993) surveys Aristophanic comedy for references to myth and ritual. Storey suggests the discouraging possibility that Aristotle gives comedy a predecessor only to balance his (plausible but unprovable) claim that tragedy developed from the dithyramb (1449d11) (Storey (2010) 180–1). Bierl is skeptical of an evolutionary hypothesis, such as is expressed by Aristotle and many others, preferring to see theater and ritual as coexistent (as Aristotle’s remark about contemporaneous phallic performances clearly suggests) (Bierl (2009) 270). See also Goldhill for an approach to Bakhtinian carnival via anthropological scholarship (Goldhill (1995) 176–88).

84 Bierl (2009) 15. See also Riess (2011), a study of the ritual performance of violence, based on the striking juxtaposition of evidence from Old Comedy, courtroom behavior, and curse tablets.

85 For a new focus on the chorus, see also Henderson (2013).

86 Bierl (2009).

in allusions to historical persons and events, the complex literary relationships between Aristophanes and both his rivals and predecessors. Much of this literary-historical material is only accessible to readers of Greek, assuming, of course, that direct evidence exists at all. As readers of Aristophanes are well aware, there are many gaps in our understanding. The scholia are sometimes helpful; at other times, they contain little of value. Needing to work within these constraints when dealing with a style rich in unusual vocabulary, non-classicists have resorted to translations and handbooks when dealing with Aristophanes. Thus, their specific results have lacked detail. Although trained in classical philology, Bakhtin had little to say about Aristophanes beyond generalities. Nor did Foucault. That is no doubt unfortunate. Nevertheless, a generation of intense work on the part of classicists has tested many of the ideas developed by contemporary theory and reformulated them in a way more adequately historicized and more nuanced. One advantage that potential theorists of Aristophanic comedy have had over scholars in other disciplines has been the long tradition of historical scholarship that has provided the basis for reconstituting the fragmented world of fifth-century BC Greece. This tradition has been immeasurably augmented in recent decades by the wealth of research on the fragmentary remains of Aristophanes and his rivals. Classicists trained to work on this often refractory material also work cautiously, since a piece of literary-historical datum—say, the title of a play, but no fragments—raises a number of possibilities but few certainties. Thus, scholars of Aristophanes using theoretical models tend to emphasize ambiguity and ambivalence, as opposed to monological orthodoxies. Keeping so many balls in the air often produces conclusions that are less sharply drawn than in other disciplines that make use of critical theory. At the same time, they preserve a flexibility of interpretation that allows them to operate efficiently within the traditional paradigms of classics while expanding them from within.

Aristophanes, Gender, and Sexuality

James Robson

Introduction

Of all the qualities of Aristophanes' plays, it is their risqué content for which they are perhaps best known in the modern world. Certainly, for commercial theaters and student productions alike, Aristophanes is regularly marketed as a “naughty” playwright, with sex—and a hint of controversy—used to pique audience interest and sell tickets. A 2013 poster of a production of *Lysistrata* at Austin State University portrays a strident, naked women with one sash across her breasts bearing the name of the play, while a second sash covering her genitalia carries the wording: “This play contains strong adult content and language” (a warning presumably designed to maximize the play’s appeal while also keeping the faint-hearted away).¹ To advertise their 2014 *Lysistrata*, Chicago’s (re)discover theatre used the image of a woman’s vanity mirror onto which a penis had been scrawled in lipstick. As this image might suggest, this production, billed as an “anti-war sex farce,” chose to put gender politics center stage. According to their publicity material, “[t]o spice things up, a male and female actor will alternate the roles of *Lysistrata* and the Magistrate every other night, giving a unique dual perspective on gender.” Audience members were also invited to “pick their gender” for the night. Those choosing to be women were charged \$15 for their ticket, while those opting to be men paid \$20—a pricing policy which, the theater claimed, reflected the pay differential between men and women in the US at the time.²

The marketing of these two productions of *Lysistrata* usefully highlights three key themes in the play’s modern reception: the push and pull of its “adult content”; its ability to be exploited as a “sexy” play; and the potential it offers to those staging or adapting the play to explore not only gender politics but also

1 <www.apsu.edu/news/apsu-area-theatre-and-dance-present-lysistrata-april-17-21> accessed 15 January 2016. For more on representations of *Lysistrata* in modern visual media, see Mitchell in this volume.

2 According to their website, in the same time it takes for the average man to earn a dollar, the average woman earns only 77 cents. <<http://rediscovertheatre.com/discover/>> accessed 15 January 2016.

topics that are especially pressing for women (such as equal pay). In this chapter, I explore these three topics in turn, largely—though not exclusively—through the lens of *Lysistrata*, arguably the best known of Aristophanes' comedies and certainly the most staged of his plays in English-speaking countries over the last 100 years. While other cultural traditions and time periods are touched on, too, the focus of this chapter is on the Anglophone reception of Aristophanes in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries—in translations, adaptations, on the page, on stage and on screen. The overall aim is by no means to provide a comprehensive account of gender and sexuality in the modern reception of Aristophanes, but rather to paint a broad picture of historical developments and to expose to view some important and thought-provoking case-studies. In the first section, I examine the changing treatment of Aristophanes' sexualized and obscene language. In the second section, I look at the ways in which those staging and adapting the plays have explored and exploited female sex and sexuality over the years. Finally, in the third section, I home in on *Lysistrata*'s legacy, with particular regard not only to how it has been staged as feminist play, but also to how feminism—seen through the lens of *Lysistrata*—has come to be aligned with pacifist and anti-establishment stances.

Sticky Issues: Obscenity, Sex, and Sexuality

The scurrilous language and sexualized content of Aristophanic comedy are rarely in evidence in pre-twentieth-century versions of the plays. Indeed, while the nineteenth century witnessed something of a boom in Aristophanic translation in Britain—and even the beginnings of a modern performance tradition—Victorian translations typically conformed to contemporary notions of taste and decency by “eras[ing] all traces of obscenity or indelicacy.”³ Similarly, staged versions of the plays either made use of sanitized translations and adaptations or—in the case of student productions performed in the original Greek—used edited versions of the plays from which “[d]irect sexual references had been entirely excised.”⁴ This tradition of eschewing obscenity continued into the twentieth century, too, as exemplified by

3 von Romberg (n.d.). For more on Frere, see Hall (2007a) 77–9; and Walsh in this volume.

4 Wrigley (2007) 142. While Wrigley's focus is on the Oxford University Dramatic Society, the best known original-language productions are no doubt those staged at Cambridge. These Greek plays, while more often tragic than comic, nevertheless boasted a notable early success with the production of *Birds* in 1883 (see Easterling (1999) 37; and Stray (1998) 157–61). On the nineteenth and early twentieth-century expurgation of Aristophanes, see Ruffell (2012).

the work of B.B. Rogers in his editions of Aristophanes' eleven extant plays. While Victorian in style (his first translation, *Clouds*, appeared in 1852), Rogers' translations remained "the one and only version of Aristophanes" for many English speakers in the twentieth century, not least because they went on to form the basis of the Loeb Classical Library editions of Aristophanes (only superseded by Henderson's Loeb editions, published between 1998 and 2002).⁵ In Rogers' translations, obscenities are either avoided, "cleaned up," or replaced by euphemisms. Indeed, Rogers chose to leave out some of Aristophanes' more scurrilous passages altogether: for the Loeb reprint, parts of *Lysistrata* and *Thesmophoriazusae* were anonymously translated and reinserted into the text.⁶

While the general trend in the twentieth century was for translators of Aristophanes to become increasingly bold with their use of obscenity—and for readers and audiences to become more tolerant of it—there is, of course, no single watershed moment when views about the acceptability of Aristophanic obscenity suddenly changed in the English-speaking world. Indeed, one significant moment in the reception of Aristophanic sexuality even comes from Victorian England itself, with the publication of the famous 1896 edition of *Lysistrata*, with its suggestive translation by Samuel Smith and its erotic illustrations by Aubrey Beardsley.⁷ This *Lysistrata* may have been self-consciously counter-cultural, but its private publication nevertheless betrays an interest in some quarters at least in exploring the sexuality and obscenity of Aristophanes' plays.⁸ A further sign of such interest can be found in 1935, with the staging of an unexpurgated version of *Lysistrata* at Norman Marshall's Gate Theatre, one of a small number of theaters in London which operated as "theatre clubs" in order to avoid censorship by the Lord Chamberlain.⁹ In Britain, it would

On the broader reception of Aristophanes in nineteenth-century Britain, see Walsh in this volume.

5 Agar (1919). A further Loeb edition of Aristophanic fragments was published by Henderson in 2007.

6 Sommerstein (2006) 130.

7 For more on Beardsley and his illustrations of *Lysistrata*, see Walsh in this volume.

8 Hall calls this edition "important as the first faithful and unexpurgated translation of *Lysistrata* into the English language," adding that it also "provides notes exactly specifying the nature of the sexual positions mentioned in the Greek text" (Hall (2007a) 91 n. 120).

9 The Gate production made use of what Walton stresses was an "adaptation" of the play, penned by Reginald Beckwith and Andrew Cruikshank (Walton (1987b) 342). In the UK, *Lysistrata* had recently been staged by Terence Gray at Cambridge in 1931, using the translation by Arthur Way (Walton (1987b) 341–2). It had also been performed as a ballet, *Lysistrata* or *The Strike of Wives*, at the Mercury Theatre in London in 1932 (Beta (2010) 250 and (2014)

be another generation before there was a genuine shift in the legal climate, ushered in by events such as the collapse of the Lady Chatterley Trial in 1960 and the passing of the Theatres Act in 1968, which put an end to censorship on the British stage.¹⁰ Before these more permissive times (and, to a certain extent, afterwards, too) the salacious and risqué elements of Aristophanes had to be carefully handled if they were to be accepted by readers and audiences and tolerated by the authorities—a situation reflected across the English-speaking world. Tellingly, this period of shifting social mores saw the number of published English translations of Aristophanes grow steadily: notable versions of *Lysistrata* published from 1950s through the early 1970s include those of Alastos (1953), Dickinson (1957), Fitts (1960), Parker (1964) and Sommerstein (whose Penguin *Lysistrata* first appeared in 1973).

When it comes to the handling of Aristophanic obscenity, published translations provide a neat way of tracing shifts that have taken place during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The most climactic obscenity of *Lysistrata*, the *πέος* (*peos*) uttered by Lysistrata as she reveals what she is asking the women to give up, has changed from “the joys of Love” in B.B. Rogers’ verse translation (first published in 1878) to Alastos’ “copulation and concubinage” (1953), Dickinson’s “SLEEPING WITH THEM” (1957), Sommerstein’s “sex” and “cock and balls” (1973 and 1990), Henderson’s “cock” (1996), Halliwell’s “prick” (1998), Kennedy’s “letting our husbands lay us” (1999), Ruden’s “penises” (2003) and Roche’s “*phallus*” (2004).¹¹ While there is, then, a tendency for the translation of *πέος* to become more direct over time, it is interesting that many modern translators still choose to avoid outright obscenity when rendering the word. Of course, much of the explanation here lies in the fact that translators have their own diverse objectives and sensibilities and are often aiming to appeal to particular audiences. The translator of Aristophanes who is proudest of the directness of his expression is no doubt Henderson, who states in the introduction to his 1996 *Staging Women* volume:

837). The play was brought to wider public attention in 1957–8 under Minos Volanakes’ direction at the Royal Court (using the translation by Dudley Fitts), a production which subsequently transferred to the Duke of York’s Theatre in London’s West End (Van Steen (2000) xiv).

10 Regina v Penguin Books, who were prosecuted under the Obscene Publications Act 1959.

11 Alastos (1953) 95; Dickinson (1957) 112; Sommerstein (1973a) 184 and (1990) 29; Henderson (1996) 48; Halliwell (1998a) 100; Kennedy (1999) 100; Ruden (2003) 9; and Roche (2004) 12. In a similar vein to Dickinson, Fitts opts for “sleeping with our men” (Fitts (1960) 11). In his Loeb translation of the play, Henderson translates *πέος* “prick” (Henderson (2000) 285), as does Ewans (2011) 59.

In my translation I have . . . made no attempt to spare the modern reader by censoring or translating around potentially disturbing material; instead I have tried to render each of Aristophanes' linguistic registers by using the nearest English equivalent.¹²

Perhaps it is no surprise that Henderson singles out his full-blooded approach to translating obscenities: after all Halliwell was still able to comment in 2000 that there are "few [translators] who shirk nothing in this area."¹³ It is worth noting that British translators often seem less inhibited than their American counterparts—with the obvious exception of Henderson.¹⁴ More uninhibited still are the translations of Aristophanes' plays published online between 2000 and 2008 by the Greek Australian George Theodoridis, who freely includes expletives and four-letter words in his translation even when there is no equivalent in the Aristophanic text.¹⁵

So much for translations of Aristophanes on the page: how do his obscenities and sexual language play out with modern theater audiences? As highlighted in the introduction, when it comes to staging Aristophanes, sex is often a key ingredient of selling a production to potential theater-goers. At the mild end of the spectrum is the Actors of Dionysus' 2010 *Lysistrata*, marketed as "riotous, irreverent and even a little naughty";¹⁶ more provocatively, the website advertising the version of the play staged at Stone on a Walk Theatre, Cincinnati, in 2015 suggests that "[y]ou won't look at war the same again after *Lysistrata*

12 Henderson (1996) 30.

13 Halliwell (2000) 78.

14 Henderson's comments in the Preface to the 1991 re-issue of *The Maculate Muse* (originally published in 1975) are hugely revealing about the attitudes towards obscenity that still persisted in US universities as late as the early 1970s. He relates that he met resistance from a number of academics when he embarked on his doctoral research on obscenity, including advice to write in Latin and the indignant question from one professor, "How could you do this to Aristophanes?" (Henderson (1991) vii). On the reception of Henderson's book by contemporary reviewers, see Robson (2014) 29–30.

15 To give a flavor of some of his milder additions, his *Clouds* begins with Strepsiades muttering, "Bugger it, bugger it, BUGGER it! Dear Lord Zeus! How long must this bloody night drag on? It's bloody endless!" (Theodoridis (2007)). This is a far cry from the more literal version of Sommerstein: "Ough! Lord Zeus, what a length of night-time! It's unending!" (Sommerstein (1982) 15).

16 Actors of Dionysus marketing pack <http://www.actorsofdionysus.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Marketing_Pack_final-.pdf> accessed 15 January 2016.

shows you how hard the last few inches to peace can be.”¹⁷ Reviewers, too, are often quick to emphasize the sexual themes of Aristophanes’ plays: “All present and erect” was the headline of one review of Peter Hall’s *Lysistrata*, staged at London’s Old Vic’s in 1993.¹⁸

Aristophanic “naughtiness” may help to get bums on theater seats, but it is also worth bearing in mind that even in the twenty-first century, obscene and sexual content still has the power to shock and offend. Henderson, for instance, calls the “reluctance of performers to enact, and audiences to come out for ‘obscene’ material” an “occupational hazard” for theater producers, citing the headline-grabbing case of the musical adaptation of *Lysistrata*, due to be staged in 2002 by the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, Massachusetts, but pulled during rehearsal for being “too bawdy.”¹⁹ Mary-Kay Gamel’s engaging account of the reworking and staging of *Thesmophoriazusae* as *The Julie Thesmo Show*—staged in Santa Cruz, California in 2000, and Cleveland, Ohio in 2001—similarly reveals anxious reactions to sexualized and obscene content. During rehearsals in Cleveland, she reports that “the vulgarity, obscenity, cross-dressing, and homoerotic elements were so shocking to some actors that they resigned from the show.”²⁰ She also documents how the warning on the posters advertising the play—“*The Julie Thesmo Show* contains obscene language and offensive content”—helped to increase attendance in Santa Cruz, but to deter audiences in Cleveland.²¹ As these diverse reactions underscore, if directors, translators, and/or adaptors want their Aristophanes to be sexualized, outrageous, or offensive, there are complex cultural factors to negotiate if audiences are to be kept on their side.

As is already hinted at in Gamel’s account of her actors’ reactions to *The Julie Thesmo Show*, it is not just obscene and sexual vocabulary that can be found challenging: the sexuality of Aristophanes’ plays—with what Stephen Halliwell has described as their “erotics of shamelessness”—regularly finds itself at odds with the contemporary sexual mores of the culture for which

17 Stone on a Walk Theatre website <<http://www.stoneonawalk.com/lysistrata/>> accessed 15 January 2016.

18 Taylor (1993). The play had transferred to London from the Liverpool Playhouse.

19 Henderson (2002) 508. The version in question, a musical called *Lysistrata: Sex and the City-State* by Gelbart Menken and Zippel, was substituted for a tamer version of the play penned by the ART’s artistic director, Robert Brustein. Brustein is reported as saying that the original musical was “ferociously obscene—much more than Aristophanes” (see Jones (2002)). It was so obscene that the leading lady, Cherry Jones, refused to perform it (see Traister (2002)).

20 Gamel (2002a) 489.

21 Gamel (2002a) 494.

they are being translated or staged.²² Gina Sheeran, the director of a student production of *Wasps* at the University of Kent, UK, in 2013 has articulated the discomfort of the cast when faced with one particularly challenging passage, for instance, namely the allusion in lines 607–9 to Philocleon's young daughter stealing the coins that her father keeps in her mouth by kissing him using her tongue.²³ And whereas some of Gamel's actors found the "homosexual elements" of *The Julie Thesmo Show* disturbing because of their frankness, the pillorying of figures like Agathon and Cleisthenes in the plays also has the potential to strike modern audiences as offensive and homophobic.²⁴ Similarly challengingly to square with modern western values is the treatment of women in Aristophanes, from the Old Comic stereotype of the wine-loving and deceitful sex-mad housewife to the focus that we find, especially at the end of many Aristophanic plays, on male-centered, sexual wish-fulfilment, often involving the objectification of young women.

Exploring and Exploiting Female Sexuality: Adaptation and Titillation

To trace the way in which female sex and sexuality have been explored and exploited by translators, adaptors, and directors of Aristophanes, let us first turn to late nineteenth-century Paris, where—as scholars such as Van Steen have shown—*Lysistrata*'s potential to titillate was routinely exploited in various French-language adaptations of the play.²⁵ Of particular importance is the version of *Lysistrata* by Maurice Donnay which premiered at the Grand-Théâtre in Paris in 1892.²⁶ A composer for, and performer at, the celebrated *le chat noir* cabaret in Montmartre, Donnay radically reworked the play, eroticizing it in the style of a contemporary French revue. This tradition of the classically-themed revue, which was already well-established in late nineteenth-century Paris, is characterized by Van Steen as one which "objectified mythical or legendary women for the sake of male voyeuristic pleasure," bringing on stage

²² Halliwell (2002) 124.

²³ Interviewed in Robson (2013).

²⁴ Gamel (2002a) 489. Gamel states that she made a conscious decision in her version of the play to preserve what she calls the Kinsman's "obscurity, homophobia and misogyny" (Gamel (2002a) 472; see also 484–5).

²⁵ Van Steen (2000) 110–1, (2014a) 442, and (2014b) 755–6. See also Kotzamini (1997).

²⁶ The script of Donnay's *Lysistrata* was reworked for further productions of the play in 1896 and 1919 (see Beta (2010) 246).

figures such as Aphrodite, Helen of Troy, or famous *hetairai* (“courtesans”) to titillate the audience.²⁷ Donnay’s *Lysistrata*, which also featured a classical courtesan figure in the form of Salabaccho, was reconfigured as a comedy of sexual manners and marital duplicity. Perhaps the most striking feature of this adaptation is that *Lysistrata*—who is married in this play to an Athenian named Lycon—breaks the oath of sexual abstinence she has sworn by sleeping with her lover, Agathos (and in so doing, symbolically overturns a statue of Artemis in the temple where the tryst takes place). This *Lysistrata* was both popular and influential, spawning further productions and imitations of the play both in Paris and beyond.²⁸

Where Aristophanes’ “women” plays were to enjoy a particularly curious reception during the early twentieth century was in Greece itself, where the first Modern Greek productions of *Ecclesiazusae*, *Lysistrata*, and *Thesmophoriazusae* were staged in 1904, 1905, and 1914 respectively at the Municipal Theater in Athens.²⁹ Female spectators were forbidden from attending these plays, which were also performed by all-male casts, the lead roles taken by established transvestite actors (“imitateurs” or “metamorphotes”).³⁰ As Van Steen outlines, these productions formed part of a broader tradition of erotic and transvestite cabaret in contemporary Athens (sometimes advertised as “soirée noire”) that had itself been inspired by Parisian cabarets and revues. Versions of *Lysistrata* in particular continued to be performed in Athens throughout the early decades of the twentieth century, providing all-male audiences with a distinctively sexist and voyeuristic form of entertainment loosely based on Aristophanes’ plays. Certainly Van Steen is unequivocal in her views about these shows which, she claims, “sustained an atmosphere of antifeminist hostility toward women and fostered male fraternization around the uninhibited, sex-based humor and spectacle of a (proclaimed) kindred male, Aristophanes.”³¹

The reception history of Aristophanes on the US stage in the first half of the twentieth century is somewhat dominated by Bel Geddes’ *Lysistrata*, which enjoyed considerable commercial success on Broadway in 1930–1. This play was itself influenced by a notable Moscow Art Theatre production of *Lysistrata*, directed by Nemirovich-Danchenko and first performed in Moscow in 1923.

27 Van Steen (2014b) 756. Donnay had recently enjoyed a modest hit at *le chat noir* with *Phryné* in 1891.

28 For a summary of the play’s plot and discussion of its influence, see Van Steen (2000) 110–1 and (2014b) 441–2; and Beta (2010) 246–7.

29 Using the prose adaptations of Demetarakopoulos (see Van Steen (2000) 102–6).

30 Van Steen (2000) 78–9 and (2014a) 412.

31 Van Steen (2002) 413.

This Russian, musical version of *Lysistrata* had garnered considerable public interest and critical acclaim when it was brought to the USA in 1925–6.³² The man who had co-translated the Russian script of the play into English (which was made available to American audience members) was Gilbert Seldes, a theater critic, author and book reviewer, with a particular interest in popular entertainment. Seeing the potential of the play to appeal to contemporary audiences, Seldes went on to write his own American version of *Lysistrata*, into which he injected modern, popular elements such as song, dance, farce, and burlesque.³³ It was Seldes' version, directed by Bel Geddes, which became a big Broadway hit, running for 256 performances at the Forty-Fourth Street Theatre, New York, and spawning further productions which toured throughout the USA.³⁴

From the point of view of gender and sexuality, what is most noteworthy about Seldes' version of *Lysistrata* is the way in which the female roles are reworked. In contrast to *Lysistrata* and the older women, who are deeply earnest in their concern about the war and other social issues, the younger women are frivolous, ineffectual, and even less able to meet the challenge of the sex strike than the women in Aristophanes' original play. They engage in extensive squabbling about *Lysistrata*'s plan, and, during the swearing of the oath, two of the women even become hysterical. The themes of sexual temptation and adultery are also dwelt on at length in the play. Not only is the Kinesias scene expanded to take in three more couples, but Kalonika also appears onstage at one point in a disheveled state, having apparently given in to temptation. Interestingly, too, in common with many adaptations of the play, *Lysistrata*—a young woman in Seldes' version—has a husband, again named Lycon, whom we meet briefly towards the end of the play.³⁵ As Kotzamani and Klein both note in their discussions of the production, when it came to costumes, Bel Geddes' attentions were firmly on the young stars of his production—particu-

32 On which see Kotzamini (2005); and Given (2015) 304–9.

33 Kotzamani (2014) 809.

34 Kotzamani also sketches the remarkable influence that this play exercised in the USA for the next 30 years, which witnessed numerous productions based on Seldes' play script and very little interest in the staging of any other play (Kotzamani (2014) 819–20).

35 In the Moscow Art Theatre version of the play, for example, *Lysistrata* is married to Kinesias, and it is she, not Myrrhine, who plays out the temptation scene. In the 1961 musical *The Happiest Girl in the World*, *Lysistrata* is involved in a singular love triangle with her husband, the Athenian general, Kinesias, and the goddess Diana. See Beta (2010) 254 and (2014) 840; and especially Given (2015) 309–12. As Beta shows, the tradition of providing *Lysistrata* with a husband in adaptations of the play extends back to at least the beginning of the nineteenth century (Beta (2010) 243).

larly the women, whose sexual appeal he sought to maximize by having them “dressed in transparent drapery” that provided “ample peeks at the bodies beneath.”³⁶

This engagement with sexuality and sexiness required some careful handling if *Lysistrata* was to stay on the right side of the censors. As Kotzamini records, the authorities in Philadelphia, where the play was first staged, did cut some lines and threatened to cut more, leading the play’s producers to take pre-emptive action in New York by defending the play’s morality in a note in the program.³⁷ But as Seldes remarks in his foreword to the visually stunning 1934 edition of the play, which contains a series of etchings by Pablo Picasso, the censor did put a stop to one performance of the play in Los Angeles, where police stormed the stage, arresting 53 members of the cast. Indeed, a warrant even drawn up for the arrest of Aristophanes himself.³⁸

Aristophanes’ plays can certainly boast their fair share of risqué stagings and brushes with the censors in the mid-twentieth century. For example, a much-discussed 1936 version of *Lysistrata* performed by an all-black cast in Seattle, Washington, sponsored by the Federal Theatre Project (an offshoot of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Works Progress Administration) was closed after only one performance, allegedly for being “indecent and bawdy.” The charged events surrounding this act of censorship seem to point to race playing an important role, however, with a number of modern commentators highlighting white anxieties about black female sexuality as one key factor.³⁹ There is, however, also a strong tradition of *Lysistrata* successfully avoiding censorship in mainstream theaters both in the USA and UK. While the proven appeal and performability of the Seldes version of the play no doubt accounts in large part for its wide use in mid-century American productions of *Lysistrata*, the fact that it had previously survived its skirmishes with censorship must also have made the play a reassuringly safe bet.⁴⁰

36 Kotzamini (2014) 815; and Klein (2014) 29.

37 Kotzamini (2014) 817–8, who also discusses the role played by the press in “discouraging interference” by the censor. See also Klein (2014) 23–4 and 31–2 on reactions towards, and the censorship of, this play.

38 Seldes (1934) 5. See also Kotzamini (2014) 818 n. 45; Klein (2014) 31; and Given (2015) 303.

39 See Witham (2003) 72–4; Klein (2014) 43–7 and 57; Whetmore (2014) 787–91.

40 Kotzamini (2014) 819 notes that “[t]here was at least one production of [Seldes’ *Lysistrata*] per year throughout the United States in the 1930s and through most of the 1940s and 1950s and into the early 1960s.” One noteworthy—if short-lived—Broadway revival of Seldes’ text was staged at the Belasco Theatre in 1946, with an all-black cast that included a young Sidney Poitier. See Arnott (1987) 361; Klein (2014) 42; and Whetmore (2014) 791–2. Seldes’ version was not the only translation of the play staged in American theaters

Of course, one way to sidestep issues of censorship altogether—and to extend the appeal of the play to new audiences—is to adapt *Lysistrata* in such a way as to avoid explicit references to the sexual sphere. This was a tactic employed by Universal Studios' 1955 film *The Second Greatest Sex*, a musical-comedy western very much in the mold of the box-office smash *Oklahoma!* (released earlier the same year).⁴¹ The action of the movie takes place in the Wild West of the 1880s where—instead of a war—the menfolk of the district abandon their women to engage in a petty squabble over which town should be the county seat.⁴² While the film certainly provided physically attractive leading actors (in the form of girl-next-door Jeanne Crain, screen siren Mamie Van Doren, and the burly George Nader), the script and lyrics were carefully crafted to be family friendly. The sexuality of this 1950s *Lysistrata* lies very much under the surface, confined within a series of figure-hugging dresses and the occasional knowing line.⁴³

There can be little doubt that the classical pedigree of Greek comedy has sometimes played a role in allowing relatively salacious content to be published or staged: or in other words, the respect afforded to classical Greek culture has historically lent a certain respectability even to its more risqué products. It is this latitude afforded to classical material which perhaps explains Walton's observation that the Royal Court/Duke of York *Lysistrata* staged in London in 1957–8—employing the far from Bowdlerized translation by Fitts—"was treated with leniency" by the censor.⁴⁴ The play, although not universally praised by reviewers, was a big hit with the public. 1957 also witnessed a BBC radio broadcast of *Lysistrata*,⁴⁵ which was followed by a television version in

during this era. In 1940, for example, *Lysistrata* opened at the Irving Place Theatre in New York in a new translation by Eric Arthur (see Arnott (1987) 361).

41 On this film, see Winkler (2014) 907–15; and Klein, who talks of the film's promotion of "a deeply conservative feminine ideal" (Klein (2014) 65).

42 The debt to *Lysistrata* is acknowledged more than once in the play. Introducing her proposal that the women should not to allow men to "hug" or "kiss" them, for example, Liza sings: "I can give you all the data/ on the girl named Lysistrata,/ so you'll know what a riot she began . . ."

43 The tight dresses and one-liners are largely the preserve of the buxom blonde character, Birdie (played by Mamie Van Doren). Admiring Liza's wedding dress, she remarks: "Oh, if I had a white satin wedding dress, I'd never take it off. Well, hardly ever." On musical versions of Aristophanes' plays, see Beta (2010) and (2014); and Given (2015). On appropriations of Aristophanes in film, see Winkler (2014).

44 Walton (2007) 161.

45 Adapted for radio by Patric Dickinson and starring Googie Withers (see Wrigley (2014) 865–7).

1964, *Lysistrata; or Women on Strike*, starring Diane Cilento in the title role. Although Patric Dickinson's version of the play had been severely trimmed for the TV version so that "it did not offend the sensitive mass audience,"⁴⁶ it still contained what one critic described as "dirty jokes . . . put over . . . unblushingly by most of the cast."⁴⁷ Responses to the broadcast were mixed, with some viewers finding the play "full of cheek" and "fun," others considering it "disgusting and coarse."⁴⁸ Greek comedy, with its veneer of classical "respectability," provided a vehicle for artists and audiences to explore and push the boundaries of acceptability in other cultures, too. In her article "Greek Drama in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe," for example, Jessie Maritz discusses a performance of *Lysistrata* which also took place in 1964—this time in Sailsbury (modern-day Harare). In this production, the girls wore bikinis: a daring move, she notes, since these had been banned at public swimming baths four years earlier.⁴⁹

As we have seen in the case of *The Julie Thesmo Show* and the ART's musical production of *Lysistrata*, adaptors and directors of *Lysistrata* in the twenty-first century have continued to test the limits of public taste when it comes to sexualized and obscene material. But along with this increased exposure of Aristophanic sex, both on the page and stage, has come an increased tendency to question the nature of the plays' sexual ethics. Feminist critiques have long since exposed the "masculinist" nature of Aristophanes' plays, of course, with their misogynist stereotypes of women and their inclusion of "mute, nude female characters" whose main function is to fulfill men's sexual needs.⁵⁰ But what do modern directors do when faced with the challenge of staging scenes featuring ostensibly nude, objectified women—figures like Reconciliation in *Lysistrata*; the flute girl, Dardanis, in *Wasps*; or Theoria in *Peace*? One common choice is to cast men in these roles, often opening up real comic potential in the form of travesty acting at the same time as avoiding some (if by no means all) of the uncomfortable gender politics with which the original play confronts them.⁵¹

46 *The Times*, January 16, 1964.

47 *The Listener*, January 23, 1954.

48 Quoted in Wrigley (2011b), who provides a useful overview of the production and reactions to it. See also Wrigley (2014) 867–70.

49 Maritz (2002) 205.

50 Zweig (1992).

51 On Reconciliation, see below. The flute-girl of *Wasps* was played by a male actor in skin-colored leotard in the University of Kent's 2013 production, for example. On film I myself have played Θεωρία ("Festival," from Aristophanes' *Peace*), dressed in a wig and an apron bearing the design of a naked, female body. See Robson (2013).

Other directorial decisions are more radical still. Evenden recounts his experience of staging a rehearsed reading of *Acharnians* at Emory University, Atlanta, in 1991, where the female actors' discomfort at playing girls dressed up and sold as χοῖροι, "piglets" (also Greek slang for "vagina") was so acute that a parallel scene was added to the play in which two boys were sold as "cocks." As Evenden comments, he ultimately "found it easier (or more urgent) to stage the problems rather than, simply, the play."⁵² A 2010 staging of a scene from *Lysistrata* at East Carolina University in 2010 followed the convention of using a male actor in a padded body suit to play the mute, nude character of Reconciliation, but then delivered a devastating twist. In an attempt to convey what the director, John Given, describes as "the dramatic and thematic functions" of the original scene, namely "the restabilization of [the] political world order and its gender roles," *Lysistrata* first ordered the actor playing Reconciliation offstage, then stripped to reveal a modest slip, and proceeded to play the role of Reconciliation herself. The strong female character at the heart of *Lysistrata* was thus reduced to a sexual object as she was groped and prodded by the Athenian and Spartan delegates. This staging was aimed not just at highlighting and heightening the act of objectification itself but also at stressing the consequences of the successful negotiation of peace with which the play ends.⁵³ That is to say, once the war ceases, the play's women surrender the power they previously exercised over men and return to their roles as subordinate housewives.⁵⁴

While Given's staging sought both to draw attention to the sexual politics of the original text and to cause a modern audience a certain amount of discomfort, other reworkings of Aristophanes' plays look entirely to reconfigure their gender dynamics. In the final scene of *The Julie Thesmo Show*, for instance, where the original play has a Scythian Archer seduced by a dancing girl, Gamel's audience instead witnessed the figure of Judy Jody being distracted by a male stripper, Fabulo (a solution that Gamel finds "more risqué" than a younger woman seducing an older man—and presumably one that a modern American audience would find less sleazy, too).⁵⁵ She also created for her play the scapegoat figure of Dick Dickerman, a "sexist [who] speaks to and about women in the most vulgar and degrading terms."⁵⁶ Gamel's aim was to recast

⁵² Evenden (1993) 101.

⁵³ Given (2011) 189.

⁵⁴ On the pedagogical experience of performing a live *Lysistrata*, see Given and Rosen in this volume.

⁵⁵ Gamel (2002a) 474.

⁵⁶ Gamel (2002a) 473.

Thesmophoriazusae as biting, feminist satire, yet one with genuine humor, too. As she playfully states, “[c]omedy is especially tricky for feminists, who are well known for our sober scrutiny of mainstream/malestream jokes . . . My co-director, cast and I hoped to create a show in which the audience could have their feminism and its laughter, too.”⁵⁷

Other self-consciously feminist productions of Aristophanes include the anarchic and experimental *Lysistrata Numbah!*, staged in New York in 1977. As Klein records, Spiderwoman Theater’s distinctive “patchwork aesthetic” allowed the all-female cast to combine parody and clowning with scenes of violence and loss, all interspersed with often intimate stories taken from the actors’ own lives (the show’s content ranged from bungled dance routines through simulated masturbation to a personal account of abortion).⁵⁸ “Too raunchy and slapstick to be feminist and too rough to be good theatre,” *Lysistrata Numbah!* not only used *Lysistrata* as a springboard to launch a feminist critique of how little society had changed in the last 2,500 years, but also directed its biting satire at other targets, including contemporary feminism itself.⁵⁹

Gendering Dissent: Feminism, Pacifism, and the Legacy of *Lysistrata*

In the case of *Lysistrata*, two important developments in particular have helped to shape its reception history in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, namely the association of the play with two causes: pacifism and feminism. Arguably, both of these connections represent a misreading of Aristophanes’ original play. As Sommerstein has shown, *Lysistrata* is far from being a “pacifist” play in the strict sense of the word: Aristophanes’ heroine may be interested in bringing the current war to an end, but she is neither opposed to war in general nor does she shy away from violent means to achieve her aims.⁶⁰ A number of factors likewise stand in the way of *Lysistrata* being read as a wholeheartedly proto-feminist play. As we have seen, Aristophanes’ women are hardly feminist role models, after all: with the exception of Lysistrata, they generally conform to misogynist stereotypes, exhibiting deceitfulness and a lack of self-control—along with an insatiable appetite for alcohol and sex. And

57 Gamel (2002a) 467.

58 Klein (2014) 87–107.

59 Klein (2014) 93 (quotation), 102.

60 Sommerstein (2009b) 223–36 and (2010b).

Lysistrata's central character may be a strong woman who ultimately succeeds in her goal, but what she also achieves in securing peace is a return to the traditional social structures that prevailed before the war. In peacetime men will once again govern the city and head up its households, while women will resume their conventional domestic (and sexual) roles.⁶¹

The potential of *Lysistrata* to be read as a feminist play has nevertheless proven hugely significant in its modern reception history, not least because it led directly—in the early twentieth century—to the play's first staging in the English-speaking world. Prior to this, the sexual themes of *Lysistrata* had resulted in its being largely sidelined in Britain and North America along with Aristophanes' other "women" plays—a situation which contrasts strongly with the plays' reception history in France during the nineteenth century where, as we have seen, the risqué content of these plays, with their sexualized portrayal of female characters, had led to their exploitation for their erotic potential. But the seeds of an alternative performance tradition had been sown elsewhere in continental Europe, namely in Germany, where a more serious-minded, political treatment of the "women" plays had begun to emerge with the production in 1895 of both *Ecclesiazusae* in Berlin and Wilbrandt's *Frauenherrschaft* ("Women in Power") in Cologne, a play inspired by *Lysistrata* and *Ecclesiazusae*.⁶² As Holtermann outlines in his study of the reception of Aristophanes in Germany, in the early twentieth century, Aristophanes' women plays began to attract the attention of supporters of female emancipation, and it was not long before a similar interest was sparked in the English-speaking world.⁶³ And so *Lysistrata*, chosen for its potential to bolster the cause of women's suffrage, was first produced in the UK at the Little Theatre in the Adelphi,

61 See Revermann (2010), who usefully expands on these issues and explores the way in which the play has been "productively" misread in modern times. Dutsch frames this phenomenon in a different way: she talks of the "deterritorialization of the *Lysistrata*—turning away from the play's topical ancient Greek implications—and its subsequent reterritorialization, [the] recasting of the *Lysistrata* in terms of modern ideologies" (Dutsch (2015) 576).

62 On Wilbrandt's play, see Holtermann (2004) 263–4.

63 Holtermann (2004) 261–3; and Kotzamini (1997). Early twentieth-century German *Lysistratas* were not uniformly vehicles for promoting a feminist cause, however. The play was famously staged in Berlin by Max Reinhardt in 1908 in what Van Steen describes as a "bawdy" version with a notoriously wild and pantomimic finale (Van Steen (2014a) 439). Moreover, Lincke's operetta, which premiered in Berlin in 1902, not only sees *Lysistrata* break her oath of sexual abstinence (in an echo of Donnay's version), but she also does so by sleeping with a Spartan prisoner whom her Athenian husband has brought back from the war. See Beta (2010) 248 and (2014) 843.

London, in 1910. As Hall states, “the London theatregoing public had become accustomed to women of the theatre, who had long been prominent voices in support of female suffrage, performing in ancient Greek dramas that gave women shocking things to do and say,” and so in one sense this production of *Lysistrata* was not revolutionary. Rather, it sat firmly within—yet, importantly, also served to extend—a tradition of Greek drama being used as a vehicle to support the case for votes for women.⁶⁴ Gertrude Kingston, an experienced actor of Greek drama, took the title role in the play, performed in a free translation by Laurence Housman (the brother of the poet A.E. Housman), himself a founder member of the Men’s League for Women’s Suffrage in England (the script even included a number of suffrage jokes). This same translation of the play also went on to be performed in support of the cause of women’s suffrage in the United States.⁶⁵ Needless to say, the Anglophone appropriation of *Lysistrata* as a feminist play in this era stands in stark contrast to the anti-feminist uses to which Aristophanes’ women plays were put in early twentieth-century Greece.⁶⁶

The use of Greek drama to promote a pacifist agenda also has a long history in the English-speaking world and beyond. This is true not just for Greek tragedy—*Trojan Women* has an especially rich tradition here—but for comedy, too.⁶⁷ The anti-war stance of *Peace* has proven particularly attractive to audiences in France in particular, where it enjoyed a number of landmark productions in the twentieth century.⁶⁸ *Acharnians* has similarly been exploited

64 Hall (2007a) 86.

65 It had been published in the UK in 1911, but not copyrighted in the USA and hence freely available for use. See Tylee (1998) 149; Day (2001) 159–76; and Hall (2007a) 87–8. Interestingly, *Lysistrata* is also the name chosen by Anthony Ludovici for an anti-feminist tract published in the UK sometime in the early 1920s.

66 On early twentieth-century stagings of Aristophanic drama by all-female student casts at Oxford and Cambridge, see Wrigley (2007) 140.

67 The first UK production of *Trojan Women*, staged in the translation by Gilbert Murray at the Royal Court in London in 1905, promoted what Hall and MacIntosh describe as a “bold ‘pro-Boer’ political stance,” a result of Murray’s “increasing revulsion against the events of the Boer War” (Hall and MacIntosh (2005) 510 and 508). Other notable pro-peace/anti-war stagings of *Trojan Women* include Granville Barker’s 1915 production, performed at Eastern US colleges (once again using Gilbert Murray’s translation) and the Chicago Little Theatre’s touring production of the same year, both responses to the unfolding events of World War I; Lewis Casson’s Oxford production of 1918, staged in Oxford to coincide with the Versailles negotiations; and Cacoyiannis’ 1963–4 New York *Trojan Women* protesting the Vietnam War (later filmed in 1971). See Walton (1987b) 339; Hartigan (1995) 16; and Foley (2012) 40–2 and 60–3.

68 Bastin-Hammou (2007).

for its anti-war themes, such as in an intriguing-sounding version called *Drum and Guitar* penned by the Aristophanic scholar Kenneth Reckford in 1967 (as Reckford ruefully explains, this “free adaptation,” featuring the war-mongering General Winemoreland—as well as General Dynamics and General Motors—fell short of both of its author’s ambitions: namely, reaching Broadway and putting an end to the Vietnam War).⁶⁹ Of course, *Lysistrata*’s plot also makes it an obvious candidate for staging or adapting as a “peace” play—a point made particularly forcefully by the title of a short-lived French-language musical adaptation of the play, *Faites l’amour, pas la guerre!* (“Make Love, Not War”), staged in Ottawa in 1969.⁷⁰

This use of *Lysistrata* as a vehicle to promote an anti-war message continues to the modern day, but perhaps is most developed in the adaptation of the play by the British playwright Tony Harrison. In *The Common Chorus* (first published in the USA in 1988) Harrison relocated the action of the play to Greenham Common, the military airbase in Berkshire, Southern England, where a Women’s Peace Camp was famously established in 1981 to protest against the deployment there of American cruise missiles. While raw its emotions and forthright in its expression, *The Common Chorus* was never performed at its time of writing. Production delays intervened and, as its author relates, “the tension of a topical present . . . leached away into oblivion . . . [T]he Cold War . . . ended and my play [was] marooned in its moment.”⁷¹ This was not Harrison’s first attempt to pen a contemporary, anti-war *Lysistrata*, however: *Aikin Mata*, his first version of the play (co-written with the Irish poet James Simmons), was performed at a time of growing national tensions at Ahmadu Bello University in Nigeria.⁷²

A more recent adaption of the play, *Lisa’s Sex Strike* by Blake Morrison, which premiered in Bolton, England in 2007, also wore its anti-war message

69 Reckford (1987) 166. Not that this was the first use of *Acharnians* in the English-speaking world to promote an anti-war agenda. The staging of the play at Oxford in 1914, for example (in a production supported by Gilbert Murray) had distinct anti-war overtones. See Hall (2007a) 86; and Wrigley (2007) 149–50. On the staging of *Lysistrata* as an anti-Vietnam war play, see Klein (2014) 2.

70 See Given (2015) 303. The production closed after just one performance. See also Beta (2014) 840–1; and on Robert Fink’s opera, *Lysistrata & the War*, written (though ultimately never staged) in the 1960s, see Dutsch (2015) 583.

71 Harrison (1992) xvi.

72 Padley (2008) 4. In the introduction to the UK edition of the play, Harrison stresses the need for a modern adaptation of *Lysistrata* to play off potent, contemporary tensions: “[i]f I wanted to do *Lysistrata* now I might have to begin again with a third and totally different version” (Harrison (1992) xvi).

on its sleeve. The fighting between whites and non-whites in Blackhurst, the fictional Northern English mill-town in which the play is set, is successfully quelled by Lisa (forcefully played in the original production by Becky Hindley). In *Lisa's Sex Strike*, the new enemy against which both sides unite is the local industrialist, Prutt (a figure inspired Aristophanes' Prytanis), whose factory turns out to be secretly manufacturing weapons components for use in the Iraq War. In addition to an anti-Iraq War agenda, this adaptation contained a clear anti-establishment undercurrent (there was extended mockery of the supposed incompetence of the British police, for example)—a theme which has also surfaced in other recent treatments of the play. Gaggle's re-working of *Lysistrata*, staged at the Almeida Theatre, London, in 2015, even went as far as foregrounding an anti-establishment angle at the expense of the anti-war theme for which the play is so well known. Instead of peace, the main concerns of the women protesters—the Vigilantes of Justice—are those of sexual consent and the iniquities of the current “money system.” Their leader, the former MP Hannah Brown (played by the singer Charlotte Church), who assumes the name Lysistrata in an attempt to conceal her real identity, dies at the end of the play while symbolically trying to break into Parliament.⁷³ Not that it is the plot that takes center stage in this play, since the episodes are regularly punctuated by riot grrrl songs delivered by a feisty all-female chorus. The vision presented by Gaggle's *Lysistrata* play may be pessimistic and anarchic, but the central idea of female solidarity in the face of a system that is broken is clear enough.⁷⁴

Topping any single translation, staging or reworking of the play in terms of its scale and scope is the Lysistrata Project, which played out in 2003. The brainchild of two US actors, Kathryn Blume and Sharron Bower, the initiative harnessed the new-found power of the internet to perform what they described as “a theatrical act of dissent” in protest at the imminent invasion of Iraq by American-led allied forces.⁷⁵ As recorded on the Lysistrata Project website, their appeal to women around the world to “[d]o a reading of *Lysistrata*

73 There is a reference in the first scene of the play to Hannah Brown having left the government because of her anti-war stance, but the details are not fleshed out.

74 Staged as part of the Almeida Theatre's Greeks series (May–November 2015). For an interview with Gaggle's Deborah Coughlin, see Mackay (2015). For a review of the production, see Healey (2015).

75 Severini documents the background to and origins of the project, noting that, in a telephone interview (54), “Blume describe[d] the choice of the play *Lysistrata* itself as accidental” (Severini (2010) 54). Yet Blume has also said that “[w]e couldn't have picked a better play if we'd tried” (quoted in Klein (2014) 120).

on March 3” was taken up in fifty-nine countries, involving some 300,000 participants worldwide, with events ranging from high-profile readings in New York and Athens to clandestine events in counties like China and Iraq itself.⁷⁶ In New York, for example, Blume and Bower took part in a reading at the Brooklyn Academy of Music’s Harvey Theater, a carnival-like event which benefited from the participation of famous actors like Kevin Bacon and Kyra Sedgwick. The adaptation of the play used was that of Ellen McLaughlin who “condensed [*Lysistrata*] in order for it to be as quick-moving and as funny as possible.”⁷⁷ In Athens, a reading took place on the Pnyx, a venue which, as Hardwick notes, “proclaimed the confidence of modern women in occupying and using a public space that in ancient Athens was the territory of men.”⁷⁸ In London a group of actors stood opposite the Houses of Parliament wearing gags, which they tore off before reading a section of the play. In Columbus, Ohio, a father and his home-schooled son created *Lysisaurus*, a version of the play they staged in their basement using plastic dinosaurs.⁷⁹

For a project that ostensibly began as a protest against the Iraq War, it is noteworthy that the agenda of the creators of the *Lysistrata* Project—as projected by their website at least—was avowedly feminist, as well as pacifist, with these feminist and pacifist agendas closely aligned. What is also strongly evident is the organizers’ powerful belief in the need to take *action* if peace and women’s rights are to be secured. Seen in this light, the readings of *Lysistrata* are fruitfully understood as a form of active protest in and of themselves—as well as a catalyst for further action. Sue-Ellen Case has even gone as far as suggesting that this belief in action draws inspiration from the ancient world in that reclaims from Greek antiquity the “unruly practice” of women’s lament.⁸⁰

One intriguing piece of afterlife that the *Lysistrata* Project enjoyed was a project organized by the Greek academic and dramaturg, Marina Kotzamani. In 2004, inspired by the readings of *Lysistrata* that she learnt had taken place in the Arab world as part of the project, she invited theater practitioners, playwrights, and theorists from across the Arab Mediterranean to write about how

76 The *Lysistrata* Project is the subject of Michael Patrick Kelly’s 2008 documentary *Operation Lysistrata*.

77 Severini (2010) 67–8.

78 Hardwick (2010) 83.

79 For further accounts of individual readings, see Kotzamani (2006); Hardwick (2010) 82–4; and Severini (2010) 67–72 and 75–6, who also includes a full list of venues and organizers of readings in an appendix. For an account and pictures of *Lysisaurus*, see <<http://www.geocities.ws/lysisaurus/>> accessed 15 January 2016.

80 Case (2007) 126. For Blume’s reflections of the project and on her subsequent play, *The Accidental Activist* (2005), inspired by her experiences, see Klein (2014) 108–26.

they would stage *Lysistrata* in their own countries. While the results, which were shared in a 2005 conference in Morocco, show a rich range of perspectives, certain themes emerged, such as globalization, US imperialism, and the inadequacy of the model of war offered by Aristophanes to capture the complexity of modern conflicts.⁸¹ What is striking once more is the way in which some participants integrated the play's themes of gender-conflict and peace in their treatments of the play. Ghada Amer, an Egyptian visual artist based in New York, and Riad Masarwi, a Palestine playwright and director, both saw men as fueling war through their natural, masculine aggression—a situation perpetuated by the patriarchal structures of contemporary society. In contrast, they credited women with a genuine desire for peace.⁸² Another contributor to the project, the Egyptian playwright and film director, Lenin El-Ramly, was inspired to write a full play, *Salam El-Nisaa* ("A Peace of Women"), which was staged in Cairo in December 2004.⁸³ In El-Ramly's version, the women's gender ultimately causes their plan to fail since, as Kotzamini summarizes, "decisions about war and peace rest with the powerful . . . who closely monitor the women's movements overtly, through brutal oppression, or covertly, through propaganda and spying."⁸⁴ The gender politics of El-Ramly's play did not come through successfully for some critics, however, owing to the decision to cast men in some of the female roles.⁸⁵

Lysistrata is that rare example of an Aristophanic play known beyond academia—something it owes not only to its relatively popularity in British and US theater (as well as its prominence in school and university syllabuses), but also, no doubt, to its memorable central conceit.⁸⁶ Put simply, *Lysistrata*

81 Kotzamini (2007). The conference was titled "The Comic Condition as a Play with Incongruities" and held at the University of Tetouan, Morocco (April 27–May 1, 2005).

82 Kotzamini (2007) 16, who also includes an interview with Amer about her treatment of *Lysistrata*.

83 El-Ramly (2005a). For an English extract of the play, see <<http://www.wordswithoutborders.org/article/from-a-peace-of-women>> accessed 15 January 2016.

84 Kotzamini (2007) 15. See further El-Ramly (2005b) and (2008); Kotzamini (2007) 26–9; and Hardwick (2010) 85–7. The idea that the peace offered by *Lysistrata* is an untenable fantasy recurs in other stagings—e.g., the Peter Hall production of *Lysistrata* at the Old Vic (1993), the ostensibly celebratory ending of which was interrupted by the lights going out and the sound machine-gun fire. See Goetsch (1993).

85 See Selaiha (2005).

86 For a discussion of Aristophanes' place in US college and university curricula, see Given and Rosen in this volume. In recent years, *Lysistrata* has featured as a set text in the UK both for A level Classics (OCR) and A Level Drama and Theatre Studies (Edexcel).

is the play about the sex strike.⁸⁷ The play's fame in this reductive formula has led to another intriguing form of reception, as studied by Helen Morales: namely the evocation of *Lysistrata* in press coverage of contemporary attempts by women to use abstention from sex as a means to effect social and political change. Morales cites a number of examples of such campaigns, but her particular focus is on the reporting of the "sex strike" that took place during Liberia's civil war in 2002, led by Leymah Gbowee, who went on to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 for her sustained efforts in furthering peace and women's rights in the country. In the press reports cited by Morales, Gbowee is described as "a modern day Lysistrata"⁸⁸ and someone who "persuaded many Liberian women to withhold sex from their warring menfolk unless they came to the negotiating table, a devastatingly successful campaign inspired by . . . Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*."⁸⁹ In fact, Gbowee later claimed to have been unaware of *Lysistrata* at the time of the "sex strike," her first contact with the play being a copy bought for her as a gift some years later.⁹⁰ In making comparisons between the Liberian situation and *Lysistrata*, however, journalists set two distinct (if complementary) processes in play. First, and most obviously, they invite their readers to view modern events through an ancient lens. But importantly, too, these press reports tacitly signal how *Lysistrata*—the ancient lens itself—is to be understood: namely as a play which is reducible to the formula of an "anti-war sex-strike" and one which can be comfortably aligned with modern causes such as twenty-first-century feminism and contemporary campaigns for peace.⁹¹

87 Borrowing a term from movie-making, Dutsch describes this reductive, abstract and ultimately saleable formula as the play's "high concept" (Dutsch (2015) 580 and 582).

88 Weinreich (2008).

89 Blomfield (2011). Note that Weinreich's and Blomfield's press reports were not strictly contemporary with the events in Liberia, but rather appeared in the USA and UK respectively in 2008, at the time of the release of *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* (a film documenting women's protests during Liberia's civil war); and in 2011, at the time of the joint award of the Nobel Prize to Gbowee.

90 Morales (2013) 295; and Kenty (2015).

91 It should be stated that Morales finds the equation between the Liberian situation and *Lysistrata* "crass and unhelpful," ultimately labeling it as an "irresponsible use of the classical, in which an ancient text is deployed in a manner that trivializes the modern political debate and silences modern political agents" (Morales (2013) 287, 294). See also Dutsch (2015) 585–6.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on just three themes—obscene language, female sexuality, and the “gendering” of dissent—but there are, of course, many other stories to be told about the modern reception of Aristophanes in terms of gender and sexuality. One such story concerns the changing treatment of men and male sexuality, for example. To date, little attention has been paid by those studying the reception of Aristophanes to men and male sexuality, yet factors such as changing social attitudes towards homosexuality in the western world over the last fifty years, the rapid growth of ancient sexuality studies as an area of academic interest since the 1970s, and the increasing gap between modern liberal ideals of masculinity and the conduct of Aristophanic men (especially when it comes to their behavior toward women) certainly suggest that this is a potentially rich area of study.

Another story which has only be touched on in passing in this chapter is the changing nature of feminist scholarship on Aristophanes’ plays. This is an area where both *Thesmophoriazusae* and *Lysistrata* have enjoyed particular prominence.⁹² What is interesting to note in academic debates about these plays is the central role that reception has played, one key point of contention being the extent to which they deserve to be studied and performed. In 1988 Sue-Ellen Case took a particularly provocative stance in regard to what she calls “the values of . . . patriarchal society . . . embedded in [classic] texts,” by stating her hope that “feminist practitioners and scholars may decide that such plays do not belong in the canon.”⁹³ Mary-Kay Gamel offered a different viewpoint in a 1999 response to Case: for her as a translator and theater director, the modern performance of ancient drama is an important way of unlocking readings which both examine and challenge the patriarchal subtext of the plays.⁹⁴ More radical still, perhaps, in the context of a modern performance is to offer a reading which ostensibly *confirms* the patriarchal values of the text, thus challenging audience members to reflect on the values embedded in the play for themselves. Such was the staging decision of Given, for instance, who in 2010 made *Lysistrata* rather than *Reconciliation* the sexual object ogled and prodded by the Athenian and Spartan delegates.

Whatever one’s personal reactions are to the stances adopted by these three scholars-cum-theater practitioners, this debate neatly demonstrates the

92 For thoughtful overviews of scholarship, see Gamel (2002b) and Henderson (2002).

93 Case (1988) 18–9.

94 Gamel (1999) 41–2.

symbiotic relationship that performance reception and Aristophanic scholarship often enjoy: each can meaningfully inform the other. The arc of this debate also shows how views on Greek drama in general, and Aristophanes in particular, regularly shift over time, with different academic and artistic approaches emerging. Indeed, this is perhaps no more true than in the case of gender and sexuality, as the discussion in this chapter has shown. As social attitudes and behaviors change, so do the ways in which scholars, translators and artists approach, understand, and exploit the Aristophanic texts. And what is special about studying reception history, of course, is the dual focus it provides. Not only does a study like this allow us an insight into how these ancient plays have been variously understood, used, and occasionally abused in the modern world; but we also gain a unique glimpse of changing social attitudes towards gender and sexuality in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries viewed through a distinctively Aristophanic lens.

Aristophanes, Education, and Performance in Modern Greece

Stavroula Kiritsi

That even eleven of Aristophanes' comedies survived in manuscripts to the present day invites a certain wonder, given the monkish and schoolmasterly guardians of the classical tradition through which they had to pass.¹ Yet they were, and still are, school texts. In part, this is because of reverence for the classical past, and because Aristophanes was prized as a superb witness to ordinary Attic speech. Still it required various kinds of maneuvers, from expurgation to pedagogical styles so narrowly philological as to repress a student's instinctive reaction to even the bawdiest language. Remarkably enough, in twentieth-century Greece the plays of Aristophanes were introduced into the school curriculum via performances—not just as texts to be read—though they were much adapted for an audience of children and student actors. In this chapter, I will trace the story of Aristophanes in the Greek educational system. I begin with a brief notice of the reception of Aristophanes from the Byzantine era through the nineteenth century, and then turn to the revival of Aristophanes through theatrical productions for children, and finally to his inclusion in school curriculum in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The productions that I will discuss are Dimitris Potamitis' *The Stories of Grandfather Aristophanes* and Karmen Rouggeri's *Ecclesiazusae Like a Fairy Tale*. Both productions are important for a number of reasons: their innovations in the repertoire (such as the inclusion of *Lysistrata* and *Ecclesiazusae*); the way they adapted Aristophanes'

¹ I would like to thank Dr. Philip Walsh for his invaluable comments and suggestions; Dr. Anna Mavroleon for providing me with much useful information from the archives of the Theatrical Museum of Athens about the dates of the productions by Dimitris Potamitis and Karolos Koun; Mr. Yannis Stamoulakis (Institute of Educational Policy, Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Greece) for offering me material about Aristophanes' school text book of 1975; Mr. Dimitris Karamanos (Greek-American College, Athens) for providing me with a copy of his book about Karolos Koun; and Mr. Yannis Zouganelis and Mrs. Karmen Rouggeri for the interviews they gave me regarding their roles in the productions of Aristophanes. Finally, I dedicate this article to my mentor, Professor David Konstan, with deep gratitude for his useful comments at various stages of this paper, his encouragement, and the thoughts on ancient comedy that he has generously and continuously shared with me.

original plays; their timing in the Greek cultural and political environment (i.e., Potamitis' version was produced in 1979, few years after the restoration of democracy in Greece); and their success in their own day and their influence on subsequent productions for children.

The Teaching of Aristophanes from Byzantium to Nineteenth-Century Greece: A Brief Survey

From the twelfth century AD onward three out of the eleven surviving plays of Aristophanes were especially popular among copyists and readers. *Wealth*, *Clouds* and *Frogs*, the so called "the Byzantine triad," were copied continuously during this century, and there are more than 170 manuscripts which include these plays. Although the "Byzantine triad" appeared together with *Knights*, *Birds*, *Peace*, and *Wasps* in an eleventh-century manuscript of Aristophanes, the Venetus Marcianus 474 (V), the four other plays were never as popular as the "triad."² In her extensive study of Greek school text books and students' notebooks during the Ottoman occupation of Greece (the so-called *Tourkokratia* from 1453 until the eighteenth century), Angeliki Skarveli-Nikolopoulou argues that teachers above all preferred *Wealth* and *Clouds* in Greece and in places like Bucharest, where a strong Greek community flourished. The teachers' preference for *Wealth*, *Clouds*, and (occasionally) *Frogs* continued into the age of printing, since these comedies were included in all editions of Aristophanes' plays, beginning with the *editio princeps* by Markos Mousouros in 1498. It must be noted that *Wealth* appears in a great number of students' notebooks from the period of *Tourkokratia*, as compared to *Clouds*. Its content was always popular and a favorite among teachers for its moral message. Nevertheless, as Skarveli-Nikolopoulou observes, Aristophanes was not as regular a part of the school curriculum as was Homer, particular plays of Sophocles (e.g., *Ajax*), or Isocrates. Aristophanes was avoided on account of his "loose tongue" and his obscenity.³

The main method used for the teaching of Classical authors, including Aristophanes, in the Byzantine educational system (starting in the early twelfth century and continuing until the Paleologean period, 1260–1453) was *schedographia*. According to Deno Geanakoplos, this method focused on the linguistic, grammatical, and syntactical analysis of a classical text, accompanied by the explanation of historical references:

² Sommerstein (2010a) 413–4.

³ Skarveli-Nikolopoulou (1998) 157, 165–7.

Byzantine scholars, after dividing the entire text before them into passages of several lines each, would write a comment or an elaborated paraphrase explaining each passage. This would include a careful analysis of terms employed, homonyms, antonyms, and so forth.⁴

In the case of Aristophanes, this method enabled students to acquire good linguistic skills in regard to classical Greek, and it also allowed teachers to side-step any inappropriate elements in plays like *Wealth* or *Clouds*. The teaching methods in the period of the *Tourkokratia* were not far different from *schedographia*. The “psychagogical” (ψυχαγωγική) and “monolectical” (μονολεκτική) methods focused on translating and interpreting words and phrases from the ancient texts with one or two synonyms in the vernacular to aid the students’ understanding, since classical Greek was not always easy for them to grasp. These glosses were written down by the students in their notebooks, in the margins of the texts themselves.⁵

St. Basil, in the fourth century AD, had recommended that if students were to benefit educationally and morally from the study of texts from classical antiquity, including Greek drama, they must be selective and follow the example of the bee, which chooses only the best and the most nutritious parts of plants.⁶ St. Basil’s views were embraced even during the nineteenth century. The educational and cultural journal, *Hermes ho Logios* (1812), states that young people who study comedy and novels (*mythistories*) must do so with as much caution and moderation as they do when they eat sweets. If they eat too many sweets, they will destroy their stomachs, and the same will happen if they study too much comedy without the necessary discrimination. The great danger in the study of comedy, according to author Dimitrios Davaris, is that the characters of comedy are imaginary and not connected with reality, and so they fill youngsters with illusions.⁷ Clearly, Davaris had in mind the characters of Aristophanes’ plays, since Menander had not yet been discovered.

Wealth might have also been included in the curriculum of the famous *Philological Gymnasium* in Smyrna, among other texts of classical Greek and Latin authors (such as Terence and Cicero) during the first decade of the nineteenth century. Although I have not come across any direct evidence for the teaching of *Wealth* in this famous school, an article in a volume of the *Hermes ho Logios* (1812) suggests strongly that it was. At the end of the winter term

4 Geanakoplos (1989) 8, 77.

5 Skarveli-Nikolopoulou (1998) 295–306.

6 Wilson (1975) 23, 35–40.

7 *Hermes ho Logios* (1812) 52–3.

of 1811, the well-known teacher of Classics at the Philological Gymnasium, Konstantinos Oikonomos, asked his students to use familiar texts from antiquity as inspirations for writing their own poetic or prose compositions in vernacular Greek. An elegant and amusing poem by a student named Panagiotis Rodios with the title “Poem on Wealth” (Ποίημα εἰς τὸν Πλοῦτον), in iambics and other meters, was praised by the teachers of the Gymnasium for its quality and was published in the above-mentioned volume of the journal. It focused on the good and bad things associated with wealth, and it ended with an exhortation to the wealthy people of Smyrna to support financially the cultural resurrection of Greece.⁸

Wealth was also an entry—among other texts of classical Greek authors—in the well-known *Encyclopaedia of Greek Lessons in Grammar, Rhetoric and Poetics*, by Stephanos Kommetas, published in 1814.⁹ The entries in this *Encyclopaedia* were extensively used by students, mainly at the high school level, and by teachers as well.¹⁰ The entry on *Wealth* includes the whole ancient text, preceded by a summary of the plot in Attic and a list of the characters in the play (τά πρόσωπα τοῦ δράματος), in which the author clearly states that they are fictional (πεπλασμένα).¹¹ He also informs readers that the play is divided into acts and various scenes within each act, and at the beginning of each act, he describes its metrical form. The article includes an apparatus with comments on grammar, syntax, etymology, and interpretations of certain words, as well as cultural information. Kommetas’ approach to the study of ancient comedy gave priority to linguistic and textual analysis, well within the established tradition for teaching Aristophanes.¹²

Dimitris Potamitis: *The Stories of Grandfather Aristophanes*

We must wait over a century before Aristophanes again makes an appearance in the Greek schools. His comedies were introduced to students in Athens in the 1930s not as part of the school curriculum but as a series of school productions,

8 *Hermes ho Logios* (1812) 133–9.

9 Kommetas (1814). *Wealth* (Πλοῦτος) is an entry in volume 12, which was published in Vienna in 1814.

10 Cf. Skarveli-Nikolopoulou (1994) 176, 302.

11 Kommetas (1814) 216.

12 Van Steen argues that Kommetas’ *Encyclopaedia* with his entry of *Wealth* (alongside an earlier entry in a similar *Encyclopaedia* dating to 1710) “amounted to a canonization of Aristophanes’ Attic diction, not of the genre per se” (Van Steen (2000) 35).

staged at Athens College, a Greek American private boys' school. The productions were part of the extra-curricular cultural education program for students, their families, and members of Greek society who were supportive of this institution. The initiative for the productions came from the school's then teacher of English and later famous Greek director Karolous Koun (1908–87), who also directed the College's productions. In 1932 he produced Aristophanes' *Birds*, which was followed by *Frogs* in 1933 and finally *Wealth* in 1936.¹³ We must now make a leap from the the 1930s to the 1970s, since, to the best of my knowledge, there seems to have been no recorded production of Aristophanes for a professional theatrical stage before that of Dimitris Potamitis.

The play, *The Stories of Grandfather Aristophanes* (*Οι Ιστορίες του παππού Αριστοφάνη*), was staged by the theatrical company "Theatre of Research," children's division (*Θέατρο Έρευνας-Παιδική Σκηνή*), for the first time in 1979, and it was repeated by the same company in 1986 and 1991. Dimitris Potamitis (1945–2003), the director and founder of the "Theatre of Research," wrote the script for the production and the lyrics of the songs, directed the production, and acted as narrator at various moments of the performance. Potamitis, a Greek Cypriot, studied philology at the University of Athens and theater in the drama school of the National Theatre in Athens. Potamitis valued quality over profit through mass-appeal, commercial productions, and this principle dictated his choices for his select theatrical productions for all types of audiences, adults but especially children. Potamitis provided an explanatory title in addition to the main title of his show, describing it as "a play for children based on Aristophanes' plays," in order to indicate his creative rewriting of Aristophanes' originals and to prepare his audience for the production. Potamitis' play consisted of five self-contained stories (something like the five acts of a theatrical play), each based on one of five plays by Aristophanes: first *Peace* and then *Acharnians*, *Wealth*, *Birds*, and *Lysistrata*. The titles of Potamitis' stories remained the same as those of Aristophanes' plays. Each self-contained story included dances and songs inspired by the plot; the music for the songs was written by the composer, singer, and actor Yannis Zouganelis.¹⁴ Zouganelis based his music for

13 Karamanos (2003) 24–5. For Koun's professional productions of Aristophanes and how the College productions are linked with his general attitude to Aristophanes as a director, see Van Steen (2000).

14 Zouganelis' first experience with Aristophanes was as a school boy in his high school in Athens in 1969, but not as part of the school curriculum. A philologist of the school had asked Zouganelis' class to study Aristophanes' *Frogs* in the original Greek as an extra-curricular activity, and to write an essay about Aristophanes' reception and presentation of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Zouganelis, as he told me, was fascinated by

the production on well-known Greek children's songs, on folk and traditional songs, and on modern popular songs which were sung by actors and singers in Greek movies of the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁵ In my interview with Zouganelis, he contended that writing songs for children's theater is a difficult task in general, which is why he chose for this show sounds and melodies familiar to children.¹⁶ By using familiar melodies he hoped the show was more playful and the young audiences were more receptive to the messages of the plays.¹⁷

The first innovation in Potamitis' production was his choice to present plays that were not based exclusively on the Byzantine triad, which had prevailed in Greek educational system for centuries. From the triad he chose only *Wealth*. However, as mentioned above, it was not unusual even in the Byzantine era for *Birds* to appear in manuscripts together with the usual triad. The link among the plays that Potamitis chose to stage is the importance of peace and social justice in order for societies to flourish and their citizens to live happily:

I wrote this play—and this book as well—so you will always remember the sufferings and misfortunes of the warlike Lamachus and the joys of the peace lover Dicaeopolis. I beg you, my friends, do not again allow war to [act as the boss] and imprison peace in a cave! In a few years you will rule the world! It will be in your hands to create a just, peaceful and beautiful country like the country of the birds [in Aristophanes' story].

Aristophanes' style, humor, and freedom of speech, and he decided to carry out further research on his own to learn more about the playwright and the ideology of his time. For Greece, which was under the Junta regime in the 1969 (the duration of the regime was from 1967–1974), any hint to freedom of speech gave hope for a better future and the end of the regime.

- 15 For example, the well-known song, "Meow, meow you little cat" ("Νιάου, νιάου βρε γατούλα"), written by the composer Manos Chatzidakis and sung in the romantic comedy film of 1959, *Το ξύλο βγήκε από τον παράδεισο* (*Spare the Rod and Spoil the Child*). This film was very popular in Greece at the time of Potamitis' production, and its story, set in a private girl's school in Athens, has been a favorite to many generations of young audiences. During the 1950s and 1960s the Greek film industry was booming and a great number of successful films were produced. For the modern Greek cinema, its themes, and ideology, see Mylonaki (2012) and Karalis (2012).
- 16 The translations of my interviews with Zouganelis and Karmen Rouggeri (below) are mine. For the advantages and limitations of practitioners' interviews as a source of information, see Burke and Innes (2007).
- 17 Potamitis' text for the production was published in a colorful book in 1985. The edition included also a CD which recorded parts of the production.

While you grow older, do study in depth the [original] comedies written by grandfather Aristophanes. You will learn a lot.¹⁸

Zouganelis too in his interview stressed that “Potamitis’ aim with this production was to initiate the students, at the age of primary school, into Aristophanes’ way of thinking without simplifying Aristophanes’ original messages.” For Zouganelis, Potamitis’ message in his adaptation of *Peace* was the advantages of peace over war, which is also the message of *Acharnians*. Here, however, peace is highlighted more clearly through the juxtaposition of Lamachus and the chorus of *Acharnians* with Dicaeopolis. The message of *Wealth* was the class division based on wealth, while *Birds* informed audiences that the activities and injustices which occur in the sky are not far from what happens on earth. Finally, *Lysistrata*’s message, as the last feature of the show, reinforced the importance of peace for the possibility of a prosperous life.

To demonstrate how Potamitis rewrote Aristophanes for Greek children, I will attend to two of the plays within the show, *Peace* and *Lysistrata*. At the beginning of *Peace*, two slaves appear on stage. One kneads dough, and the other talks to him continually and grumbles all the while. At first, the spectators do not hear their voices but only see their gestures, since the actors perform as though in silent movies, one allusion among many to modern media. The audience soon learns that they are kneading dough in order to feed a beetle, working hard because their master wishes the beetle to grow quickly. The slave who is mainly in charge stops to relax and breathe because the ingredients smell so bad:

... how can I continue kneading since the odor is choking me. It is unbelievable: this beetle enjoys pies made of pee and poop! It’s true, kids ... What can I do, poor me? I am trying to do what the customer wants. Kids, if you do not believe come close to the trough to smell and you will reek.¹⁹

The other slave orders him to “shut up and keep kneading.”²⁰ When the dough is ready, the first slave, by now thoroughly fed up, hands it to his colleague: “give it to him to eat it, to be full of it and hopefully so that he blows up

18 Potamitis (1985) 8.

19 Potamitis (1985) 10.

20 Potamitis (1985) 10.

(“και να σκάσει”): enough is enough.”²¹ The slave who is now holding the dough indicates his disgust by way of gestures and words:

Man, what stench is this? My nostrils suffer. Guys, do you know by any chance, where they sell noses without nostrils, so I can buy one? Ah, ah, believe me there is no worse job than kneading pies for a beetle . . . Damn, this beetle is also spoiled: he wants well-prepared dough like a freshly made loaf of bread!²²

The slave throws the dough to the beetle from a distance and then listens for any noise coming out of the beetle’s nest, in order to see whether the beetle has finished eating: “what is going on? Has he already gobbled it up? He eats ravenously. What greediness!”²³ Potamitis deliberately employs a colloquial expression in modern Greek (ντερλίκωνω, “to gobble up”), which many children will have heard their parents use as a reproach for overeating.²⁴

The episode with the slaves and the beetle serves as an introduction to the fairy tale section of *Peace*. Potamitis, who acts as narrator here, promises to explain what is going on and why the beetle has such importance in the story. He begins with the common expression, “once upon a time,” and continues, “a big war broke among the cities of Greece.”²⁵ Trygaios [Trygaeus], an Athenian man, complains to his god and voices his desperation with the situation in his country: “What are you going to do, my dear god? Why do you allow the war to destroy Greece?”²⁶ Trygaios is determined to meet the god and talk with him in person about the war and the destruction it has caused. He has used every physical means to reach the god but without luck. In one effort he employed a big ladder, but, unfortunately, instead of reaching god’s house, he badly crushed his own head. The solution came to him when he saw a tiny dung beetle and imagined that this little creature could enable him to fly to

21 Potamitis (1985) 10: “... να φάει, να χορτάσει και να σκάσει! Α μα πια.” The phrase “και να σκάσει” has a twofold meaning, both common in modern Greek: a) the beetle will explode with so much food; and b) in the popular, colloquial sense as a curse, “να σκάσεις και να πλαντάξεις,” which means “to explode and cry your eye’s out.” Both meanings are metaphorical. For the various meanings of expressions with the verb σκάζω-σκάω, see Babiniotis (1998) sv.

22 Potamitis (1985) 10–1.

23 Potamitis (1985) 11.

24 Babiniotis (1998) sv. ντερλίκωνω: a colloquial word, “eat greedily a big portion of food.”

25 Potamitis (1985) 11.

26 Potamitis (1985) 11.

the skies, if it were fed enough to grow huge.²⁷ Trygaios' slaves considered him completely mad, but they followed his orders.²⁸ When the slaves asked him why he did not choose another way to reach the sky, Trygaios simply replied, "there is no other means of flying to the sky. As you know, the aeroplane has not yet been discovered."²⁹ One of the slaves decides as a last resort to appeal to Trygaios' daughter, asking the girl to stop her father from his crazy plan: "you kid, you girl, your dad is departing and leaving you alone. He is going to the sky straddling a beetle. He will definitely crash (γκρεμοτσακιστεί) from this height. Come on, block him, and implore him to stay here."³⁰ Trygaios' daughter appears on stage and in a melodramatic tone sings a song to make her father rethink his plan:

Father, my daddy, papa, you are going away riding a beetle. But if you collapse and I am left an orphan, have you considered who would choose me as his wife? How did riding a beetle stick in your mind so you think you can cross such a distance with it and reach the sky? Alas, stay here, and I will feed you with caviar. Let the god alone amidst the clouds.³¹

Although Trygaios tries to calm his daughter down, he does not change his mind. He sings a response to his daughter and affectionately bids her farewell. At the same time, he asks the beetle's cooperation for the long journey:

... my daughter, my flapper, my sweet daughter, do not be afraid your daddy will not fall down. Look how tightly he holds the beetle's wings and he will return soon, if god wishes. Bye, goodbye. I hold the golden bridle [Trygaios here imitates sounds of animals' movements, such as horses and donkeys], and we fly up to the sky. My sweet beetle, beware not to lose our route to the sky, do not shake ... be careful so we will not crash down ...³²

Hermes is the first god whom Trygaios meets in the divine neighborhood. Potamitis makes Hermes speak in a mannered style, unable to pronounce "r" properly. He appears haughty when he first sees a stranger among the gods,

²⁷ Potamitis (1985) 11.

²⁸ Potamitis (1985) 11–2.

²⁹ Potamitis (1985) 12.

³⁰ Potamitis (1985) 12–3.

³¹ Potamitis (1985) 13.

³² Potamitis (1985) 13.

and the smell of the beetle makes Hermes even more rude. He expresses his disgust in the kind of mildly vulgar language that is amusing to children while holding his nose (as children do): “You dirty (βρομιάρη), filthy (βρομερέ), smelly man (βρομιάρη), first among the dirtiest, how did you manage to come here, you stinking fellow? Tell me your name.” Trygaios makes fun of Hermes’ annoyance by introducing himself as “Dirty” (Βρομιάρης) who comes from “Vravrona” (Βραβρώνα).³³ Like Aristophanes, Potamitis gets a laugh by playing on the sounds of Βρομιάρης-Βραβρώνα. Upset with Trygaios’ mockery, Hermes replies with slang expressions of his own: “come on, cut it out. Don’t take the mickey. Tell me your name or else go weep for all these, Charalambos.”³⁴ Finally, Trygaios wittily reveals his true identity:

Trygaios . . . a vine grower from the deme of Markopoulo, in the outskirts from Athens . . . You know, Athens, [a city] of Greece, which belongs to Europe, which belongs to earth, second planet on your left, after the twenty-fifth cloud. Got it now [μπήκες τώρα;]?³⁵

Hermes is puzzled as to why a citizen from Greece has come to the sky. Trygaios, in his attempt to flatter Hermes and extract from him the information about where Zeus lives, says that he has come to offer Hermes a present. Hermes becomes instantly sweet and welcomes Trygaios wholeheartedly.³⁶ Trygaios, now in control of the “profiteer” (συμμεροντολόγος) Hermes, orders him to summon Zeus, his master. Hermes replies that Zeus has moved out of his palace since he was very angry with the Greeks:

. . . because they opened their houses and let inside cursed, stupid, dirty war. [Zeus] chose another palace to live, at the far end of the sky and away from earth, so he would not have the Greeks in his sight, [those Greeks] who make the man, sorry I mean to say god, so upset.³⁷

33 Potamitis (1985) 14.

34 Potamitis (1985) 14. Babiniotis (1998) sv κόφτω, a colloquial verb; sv πλάκα: it is used in a metaphorical sense, in expressions such as “κάνω πλάκα σε κάποιον (play a joke on somebody),” or “άσε την πλάκα (stop kidding),” the expression here; sv. κλαίω: the expression “weep for these, Charalambos” is used to describe a hopeless situation.

35 Potamitis (1985) 14. The expression “μπήκες τώρα” is slang. See Babiniotis (1998) sv μπαίνω.

36 Potamitis (1985) 14.

37 Potamitis (1985) 15.

Trygaios does not give up; he is determined to stop the war among the Greek cities even without Zeus' cooperation. He only wants to find out where Peace is and to bring her to Greece, and so he charmingly asks Hermes if he knows her "ladyship Peace" and where is she now. Hermes knows her very well, as Trygaios realizes from the affectionate terms he uses for her: "Rinoula, Rinio [Ρηνούλα, Ρηνιώ]," which in modern Greek are nicknames for Irene (Ειρήνη)—that is, Peace.³⁸

In his conversation with Hermes, Trygaios is informed that Peace has been imprisoned by War in a dark cave from which she cannot escape because War has closed off the entrance with huge rocks. Trygaios and Hermes listen in silence to a warlike anthem and see War approaching with his scary armor. War announces that he intends to involve more cities in the conflict (Athens and Sparta, of course, but also Thessaloniki, Volos, and Patras). He then mixes the cities in a huge mortar with spices, garlic, cheese, and ketchup; blends them into a mash; and declares that not even Henry Kissinger, the former U.S. Secretary of State, could have imitated his recipes.³⁹ All that is missing is the tears that war provokes in poor mortals, and these are provided by Trygaios. Like Aristophanes, Potamitis interlards his text with names of famous politicians of his time appealing to the experiences of adult members of his audience but also stimulating the children to ask who Kissinger is. Additionally, the names of the cities in his mixture conform to the experience of his youthful audiences.

Trygaios, upset with the "bugger" (αλήτης) war and his merciless behavior, decides to undertake the laborious task and release Peace.⁴⁰ Hermes warns him that Zeus has set the penalty of death for anyone who attempts to rescue her. But Hermes finally goes along with the plan (thanks again to a bribe of sweets, candies, and a golden cup). Trygaios realizes, however, that the task requires many helpers, and he asks the kids in the audience to help, to which they happily agree. Trygaios praises their love for Peace (ειρηνόφιλα παιδιά) and states that the world would be a better place if only there were more peace lovers, like the children in the audience.⁴¹

Peace, however, refuses to be rescued by Trygaios. Though he addresses her affectionately as "Rinio, Rinoula, Rinaki," she turns her back on him.⁴² Peace

38 Potamitis (1985) 15.

39 Potamitis (1985) 17.

40 Potamitis (1985) 15.

41 Potamitis (1985) 17.

42 Potamitis (1985) 19.

will only disclose the reason for her anger to a child, a member of the audience who takes part in the rescuing process. She explains that she visited Athens three times with peace proposals, but the Athenians kicked her out. Trygaios acknowledges that the “sinful” (οἱ κολασμένοι) Athenians feel regret and will not let Peace leave their country in the future.⁴³ After consulting the children of the audience as to whether she should believe Trygaios’ promise and winning their approval, Peace leaves the cave. All celebrate her freedom with a song, which is reminiscent of the rhythm of a children’s song. All express their joy and announce that Athenians in the future will care about the prosperity of their country and not wage war.⁴⁴ Peace sings her response to the Athenian promises and threatens: “If any one again holds a shield, he will end up with a spike in the bum (στον ποπό) and [hot] peppers on the tongue.”⁴⁵ And on his return to Athens, Trygaios faces a reaction by a gun manufacturer (οπλοπώλης), whose business is now bankrupt. Trygaios ridicules the man’s desperation and proposes that he sell the tassels on soldiers’ hats as dusters and helmets as pots for kids to pee in.⁴⁶

The adaptation of *Peace* is close to children’s daily life and experiences. The language of Potamitis’ text enhances this intimacy. He uses many colloquial and slang expressions from everyday speech, which makes the text easily understandable by the young audience but does not diminish its literary quality. Although Aristophanes’ original play has been changed to appeal to the taste of modern Greek children, Potamitis respected not only the essence of the comedy but also the plot line, the role of the characters, the wit, and the references to contemporary politicians. The way Trygaios’ daughter begs her father not to travel to the sky is in a style that modern kids might resort to in articulating their concerns or fears to their parents. The “naively” diplomatic and manipulating style of Trygaios toward Hermes does not set an inappropriate example for children but aims mainly to amuse the audience and to promote the good of peace for societies. Potamitis, having due regard for the proprieties of formal education, shows by his adaptation that the teaching of Aristophanes cannot be merely selective but must be faithful to his meaning and context, without deferring to narrow social values and conventions. The involvement of children in certain parts of the story (e.g., the rescuing of Peace and participating in the songs) encourages them to think how a society can achieve peace and prosperity through collective responsibility and

43 Potamitis (1985) 19.

44 Potamitis (1985) 19.

45 Potamitis (1985) 20.

46 Potamitis (1985) 21.

participation. After all, this is the message of democracy, and not alien in spirit to Aristophanes' own preaching in his parabases and elsewhere.

According to Potamitis' adaptation, the Greeks did not keep the promise they gave to Peace. In his treatment of *Acharnians*, the next story in the production, he deals with the passion for more war, which caused additional pain and destruction among the Greek cities. The stories of *Wealth* and *Birds* follow, and Potamitis' approach is similar to the way he adapts *Peace*. I turn therefore to *Lysistrata*, which was a brave choice by the director, even in the form he presented it, as a play for children in 1970s. *Lysistrata* was not part of the traditional Aristophanic repertoire in the Greek educational system. If *Peace* was of special interest for its style, novel jokes, and the character of Irene, which Potamitis invented to amuse children, *Lysistrata* reveals yet another dimension of Potamitis' creativity.

Unlike the previous plays, which are presented in a theatrical form, *Lysistrata* is mainly narrated by an actress. Reminiscent of a teacher in a classroom, she recites the main storyline of Aristophanes' comedy: that is, how the women of Athens decided to stop a huge war by organizing a strike. There is no mention of the sex strike that features so prominently in the original version. In Potamitis' text, the women of Athens, led by Lysistrata, lock themselves in the temple of Acropolis and abstain from all household duties.⁴⁷ The reason for the strike is the endless absence of their men, due to service in ongoing wars. This results in a lack of food and other necessities for women and children. We are told that in ancient Athens women did not work and relied solely on the income of their husbands and fathers. The actress-narrator stresses that the children "were emaciated . . . got sick and were screaming."⁴⁸ The narrator underscores the point by comparing the starving children of modern Africa (in the 1970s) and those of the ancient Athens.⁴⁹

The first effect of the women's strike is felt when some Athenian warriors visit their houses on a short break from their military duties. In particular, Kinesias is disappointed by the mess: a dirty house and dirty and hungry children. He begs his wife Myrrhine to stop the strike and return home. Myrrhine asserts that if the Athenians will sign a peace treaty with their enemies and refrain from taking part in any war in the future, she and the other women will return to their houses. The negotiation between the couple takes a while, but

47 Potamitis (1985) 78.

48 Potamitis (1985) 78.

49 Potamitis (1985) 80.

finally Myrrhine wins. The Athenians sign a peace treaty, and the men return to their homes.⁵⁰

The narrator asks the children if they like *Lysistrata*'s story, and in response to their positive answer and applause, she asks why they like it. After a short dialogue about what makes the play likable and distinctive, the children and the narrator reach an agreement: if we cannot convince others of what is just and good for society by using reason (με τη λογική), we can impose it with strikes—a strike, of course, for a good cause. In addition, the narrator asks the children immediately to undertake a strike themselves to seal the agreement—a strike against all war toys, including guns. The children agree not to buy guns and war toys in the future. The narrator also proposes that they dedicate their strike to the children of Africa and of Cyprus who have suffered enormously due to wars.⁵¹

The end of *Lysistrata*, and the end of the entire production, is marked by Potamitis' advice to the children to think about the message of Aristophanes' stories when they return to their homes. All the actors, together with the children, close the show by thanking grandfather Aristophanes for the wonderful stories he wrote, and sing a song dedicated to him: "Grandpa Aristophanes, [you are] a branch of a green olive tree, how much we love you! With your crazy jokes, your serious and supernatural stuff, how much we laugh!"⁵²

Although Potamitis' *Lysistrata* in its literary form is different from Aristophanes' play, it nevertheless remains close to the spirit of the original. The playful interaction between the narrator-actress and the children is an effective way to sensitize the children to the issues of war and peace. The purpose of theater for Potamitis is not only to entertain but also to instruct without moralizing, and he succeeded in showing to both live audiences and readers that we should not be afraid to teach Aristophanes' plays to children of all ages. There are always creative ways to approach the wisdom and humor of our "grandfather" Aristophanes.⁵³

⁵⁰ Potamitis (1985) 79.

⁵¹ Potamitis (1985) 79–80. Potamitis comes from Cyprus, and he refers here to the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974, when the Turks captured a great part of the island. One of the results of this invasion was that many Cypriots became refugees, and their lives were thrown into disarray.

⁵² Potamitis (1985) 81.

⁵³ Potamitis' show has been continuously mounted by various theatrical companies since its initial production in 1978. They include Troupe 81 (Θίασος 81) in 1981, the Municipal and Regional Theatre of Larissa in 1991, and the Municipal and Regional Theatre of Rhodes in 1993. The show was performed for two years (2014–5) by the director Nikos Daphnes for the company, "Under the Bridge" (Κάτω από τη γέφυρα), in Athens. All these companies

Karmen Rouggeri: *Ecclesiazusae Like a Fairy Tale*

If staging *Lysistrata* for children was a challenge, adapting Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae*, with its revolutionary treatment of women taking power in the state, was no less so. *Ecclesiazusae Like a Fairy Tale* was staged by the National Theatre in Athens under the auspices of the Παιδικό στέκι, the department of the National Theatre that produces plays specifically for children. Running from the winter of 1997 until the spring of 1998, it was the first time *Ecclesiazusae* was performed in a children's production by a theatrical company in Greece. Karmen Rouggeri (born 1938), a well-known actress and director, translated and directed the play. She has extensive experience producing plays for children, and derives inspiration for her productions from Greek mythology, ancient and modern Greek literature, and fairy tales.

Rouggeri studied music in conservatories in Greece and Italy, and she invests *Ecclesiazusae Like a Fairy Tale* with many songs. Their music and rhythms were based on well-known modern Greek folk songs from all parts of the country. Rouggeri believes, as she told me in an interview, that folk music is the "classical music" of Greece and that children must be trained to listen to this type of music because it is linked with the Greek tradition and offers them a good musical and aesthetic training. The lyrics of the songs were written exclusively for the production by the opera singer and musician Andreas Kouloumbis. The songs, placed in various parts of the play, do not necessarily occupy the position of choral songs in the Aristophanic originals. Their function is to comment on various aspects of the plot and characters.

Rouggeri herself adapted Aristophanes' original play, taking into account previous translations of the play in demotic Greek, among them the well-established verse version by the classicist Thrasyboulos Stavrrou.⁵⁴ Rouggeri was careful to respect the structure and the general plot line of the original, but she avoided the sexual jokes and βωμολοχία ("buffoonery") of Aristophanes. To compensate, she introduced new elements and indeed new characters, who

retained Potamitis' title, *Ιστορίες του παππού Αριστοφάνη*. As for the text, it is often used today by students in Greek schools for productions of Aristophanes, even though the ancient plays are not always preferred for school curricula (see below).

54 Stavrrou's translations of the eleven plays of Aristophanes are continuously used by various Greek theatrical companies for productions, including the National Theatre. They have also been published in a special volume in 1967. Notably, the National Theatre used Stavrrou's translation of *Ecclesiazusae*, for the first time, in 1956 for its participation in Epidaurus Festival (Stavrrou (1967) 26). For a detailed analysis of the style Stavrrou's translations of Aristophanes, see below.

were not part of Aristophanes' comedy, so as to entertain the audience and at the same time to teach more effectively what she took to be Aristophanes' message. Rouggeri's linguistic style is close to spoken Greek, enriched with colloquial expressions with which children are familiar. The production is geared to all ages: young children, adolescents, and their parents. She argued that a child at the age of four could take away from a production like her *Ecclesiazusae* a memory of the props, colorful costumes, music, and the magic world of the theater, while an older child could focus on the timeless message of the play.

The opening scene represents a neighborhood in Athens with colorful houses, one of which belongs to Praxagora. In a prominent location stands a large bust of Aristophanes, and an actor informs the audience of his identity and connection to the play. The play opens with a drummer who announces the start of the show. The drummer accidentally nudges Aristophanes' statue, and all of a sudden Aristophanes awakens and starts talking. He asks the drummer if they are performing one of his plays and, if so, which of the forty he wrote. The drummer is puzzled by the question and replies that "only eleven plays of yours have been preserved, most honored man."⁵⁵ Although Aristophanes is sad at the loss of the rest of his comedies, he expresses his gratitude to the gods that at least eleven have survived through the centuries.⁵⁶ When the drummer reveals that they are about to perform *Ecclesiazusae*, Aristophanes is delighted and says that he considers this play to be something of a fairy tale.⁵⁷ Rouggeri thus wittily insinuates Aristophanes' approval of her title. The drummer then offers information regarding the original production in ancient Athens, including the date and the social and historical circumstances at that time. He states that although the Athenians had taken part in many wars which had destroyed their city, they still did not realize the value of peace for their lives and prosperity, and he is disappointed at their behavior. The drummer's part then comes to an end, and Aristophanes resumes his role as a statue, remaining silent through the show, though he watches attentively.

Following the prelude is a song in the rhythm of "The Fishing Boat" (Ψαροπούλα), a popular folk song throughout Greece. The lyrics of the original are about the trip of a fishing boat in the Greek islands; in the *Ecclesiazusae* they are adapted so as to suggest that Aristophanes' play travels in the sea of

55 I cite Rouggeri's text, which also contained the songs, published after the production in a colorful book in 2011.

56 Rouggeri (2011) 12.

57 Rouggeri (2011) 13.

Greek culture, and, despite its age, remains full of “cool breezes” (δροσιά), “joy” (χέφι), and “jokes” (αστεία).⁵⁸

In Act 1, Praxagora sneaks out of her house at night, dressed in a man's clothes. Her only company is a lamp, which knows all secrets of men and women but never betrays them.⁵⁹ Praxagora waits for a number of women from the neighborhood to gather near her house so they can walk together to the place called “Diogenes’ Lamp,” where they will meet more women from other districts of Athens before proceeding to the Assembly.⁶⁰ Praxagora's servant Doulareti arrives first, eager to take part in Praxagora's grand plan, and then Sostrate and Philaineti, who figure in Aristophanes' original. All the women are dressed as men, as Praxagora had instructed them. A male neighbor of Praxagora, wearing only his underpants and holding a full night pot (the contents of the pot are not mentioned), stands in the courtyard of his house, calling to his wife to tell him where to empty the pot. He trips over someone who he thinks is a drunkard sleeping in the street. In fact, it is his wife, but he does not recognize her.⁶¹ Failing to find his wife, he returns to his house, and the women, happy that he did not detect them, prepare to depart. However, they keep invoking female goddesses, such as Artemis and Hera, forgetting Praxagora's orders to swear only by male gods since they are now acting as men. Such jokes are inspired by the original play, and they compel Praxagora to decide that only she will speak in the Assembly, since the others might accidentally reveal their true identities. As in Aristophanes, Praxagora reminds her friends and simultaneously explains to the audience that they are going to the Assembly (Εκκλησία του Δήμου) dressed as men in order to vote in a women-led regime.⁶² The audience will be filled in on the details after the vote.

At this point, Rouggeri improvises. On their way to Assembly, another male neighbor bumps into Charitimidaina, the wife of Charitimides.⁶³ Charitimidaina succeeds in talking and acting like her husband, and when the man asks her where she is going so early in the morning, she replies that she is heading to the Assembly, where all citizens must go in order to vote on

58 Rouggeri (2011) 16–7.

59 Rouggeri (2011) 20.

60 “Diogenes’ Lamp” is near the Athenian Acropolis and the place where the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates stands.

61 Rouggeri (2011) 22.

62 Rouggeri (2011) 25–6.

63 Rouggeri's choice of names for the women who join Praxagora stays mainly close to Aristophanes' original names in the cases of Sostrate, Philaenete, and Glyke. For these characters in the original play, see Sommerstein (1998) 46–7.

the city's affairs. The man insists that he would only go to the Assembly to receive the regulation payment for attendance, implying that he is indifferent to its activities. Charitimidaina reminds him of Pericles' famous funeral oration: anyone who does not participate in politics is useless.⁶⁴ The entire scene is Rouggeri's way of teaching the young audience the importance of civic responsibility, a view going back to Pericles and still the foundation of a modern democratic constitution.

The scene concludes with the women singing (in masculine voices) another traditional folk song, "Forty Lads from the City of Livadeia." The song was composed sometime before the Greek revolution against the Ottomans in 1821, and describes how forty men from the city of Livadeia, in the region of Boeotia, marched to Tripolis, in the Peloponnese, to join other fighters in order to free the city. It is usually sung at schools during celebrations for the Modern Greek National Day on March 25. Rouggeri adapted the lyrics as follows: "We, the lads from Attica, go to the Boule to vote. The time has come to start our journey so we will get there on time. We wear beards and men's cloths and we go to Pnyka to receive an obol."⁶⁵ The women are clearly motivated not by payment but by civic ideals.

When Blepyrus, Praxagora's husband, wakes up and realizes that Praxagora and their servant Doulaleti are not in the house, he panics. They have three children, the young boy Blepyraki and two toddler girls. Blepyraki screams, "Mummy! Mummy, where are you? My little tummy hurts."⁶⁶ Blepyrus searches for his clothes while the girls cry, but since Praxagora has taken them, he puts on the first garment he finds, which is Praxagora's night gown.⁶⁷ Blepyraki in desperation tells his father, "Daddy, I cannot stand it anymore. I will poo [θα τα κάνω]."⁶⁸ Blepyrus offers him the night pot and advises him to go outside with it, but the boy is uncomfortable and grumbles that he may be seen by a neighbor.⁶⁹ Blepyrus tells him no one comes by this early in morning, but unfortunately the two daughters of their neighbor, Chremes, see Blepyraki from their house and call him to play with them.⁷⁰ Blepyraki's painful tummy lasts for a

64 Rouggeri (2011) 27. Cf. also Thucydides, Book 11.40: "... we alone regard a man who takes no interest in public affairs, not as a harmless [lit., inactive], but as a useless character" (Hornblower (1991) 305).

65 Rouggeri (2011) 27–9.

66 Rouggeri (2011) 32.

67 Rouggeri (2011) 37.

68 Rouggeri (2011) 33. "Θα τα κάνω" is a mild expression that children use to express their need to excrete.

69 Rouggeri (2011) 34.

70 Rouggeri (2011) 37.

while, since, as his father informs the audience, “a little pear has blocked his little intestine.”⁷¹ The boy’s begs his father, “My daddy, I am suffering, please call a doctor. Look for a rectal specialist [πισινολόγος].”⁷² When at last he succeeds, Blepyraki goes happily with his toys to play with the girls. In Aristophanes’ original play, of course, Blepyrus is the one who has trouble excreting.⁷³ As Rouggeri told me, she decided to add the children in order to stress the father’s incompetence in household chores and to underline the importance of the wife in managing the family. She also replaced Blepyrus with the child for aesthetic reasons: she dislikes the idea of adults easing themselves publicly even on stage, whereas the same spectacle is not “ugly” in the case of a sweet and innocent child. Moreover, since many of the spectators were children, they could relate more easily to another child in this situation. The rest of the act, in which Blepyrus recounts what happened at the Assembly, is fairly close to Aristophanes’ original, save that it is interlarded with songs sung by Praxagora and the women to celebrate the new regime in Athens. The women assure everyone that they will rule with justice and keep wars away from Athens.⁷⁴ Under their administration the city will prosper, and everyone will have access to food and to good and pleasurable things.⁷⁵

Rouggeri’s script is closer to Aristophanes’ original than Potamitis’. She educates the children in the prelude about Aristophanes and his times, and the importance of his comedies for modern audiences. Throughout the whole show Potamitis too exploited a narrator who informed the audience about historical events and characters; his Aristophanes, however, assumes the role of a wise grandfather who wishes to teach his grandchildren about war and peace. Both Potamitis and Rouggeri explain why Aristophanes and classical comedy are important and should be taught and performed so many centuries after the plays were created. Although Potamitis and Rouggeri avoid the sexual jokes and βωμολοχία of the original play, they manage to retain Aristophanes’ wit and even some of his bawdiness, discovering creative ways to stay true to his message and style. The incorporation of folk and popular songs in their productions also indicates that Aristophanes’ comedies are part of the Greek cultural tradition, and cannot be ignored by exclusion from the school curriculum.

71 Rouggeri (2011) 39.

72 Rouggeri (2011) 42.

73 See Sommerstein (1998) 66–7, 68–9, and 70–1. At line 320 Aristophanes’ Blepyrus uses the verb χέζω. While in modern Greek the same verb exists and is used in many expressions, including as a swear word, it is not a polite term.

74 Rouggeri (2011) 51.

75 Cf. Sommerstein (1998) 76–7.

Coda: Aristophanes as a School Text Today

Aristophanes' comedies entered the formal curriculum of the Greek state schools for the first time in 1975, and the influence of stage productions is palpable. Sadly, the textbook versions (even to this day) lack much of the Aristophanic hilarity and daring evident in the productions aimed at children. For instance, the textbook on the subject of ancient Greek literature in translation, addressed to students at the lower high school (Gymnasium) level, includes Aeschylus' *Persians* and Aristophanes' *Frogs*. *Persians* is translated into demotic Greek by the novelist and teacher, Ioannis Gryparis (1870–1942), while *Frogs*, also in demotic Greek, was translated by Thrasyboulos Stavrou (1886–1979). Although teachers had the option to teach either the tragedy or the comedy, the tragedy was preferred throughout the years this text book was used. Even though the educational authorities permitted Aristophanes to be taught in high school, it was evidently feared that his obscenity (among other things) would corrupt the youth. The introduction to the section on comedy included a brief but informative essay by the university professor and classicist, Ioannis Kakrides, which discussed Aristophanes' dramatic technique and style and the cultural background of his plays.

Although the whole of *Persians* is translated, only certain passages of *Frogs* are offered in translation, and missing parts are filled in with summaries (for example, lines 1–199 are summarized, while 200–50 are translated). Once again, the Greek educational authorities opted for an Aristophanic comedy which had been part of the tradition since the Byzantine era, and one that had less βωμολοχία than other plays and was least offensive to the prevailing morality. What is more, Stavrou, whose translations of all eleven comedies of Aristophanes have been used in theatrical productions since the 1950s and are regarded as “classics,” was guided by a code of traditional propriety, and he removed all βωμολοχία in his versions. In addition, he often interpreted the text and included comments from the scholia to Aristophanes, and so the translation is rather different from Aristophanes' original. Van Steen rightly stresses that Stavrou “eschewed vulgarities as untrue not to the original, but to the National's desired prototype.”⁷⁶ The translations are in demotic, but the style does not reflect the evolution of the modern Greek language.

It is more surprising that Stavrou's translation of *Birds* is also used in the subsequent textbook, which was introduced for the third year of the State High Schools in 2006. Once again, Aristophanes competes with a tragedian (this time, Euripides), and once again the tragedian is the more popular choice for educa-

76 Van Steen (2000) 200.

tors. The textbook of 2006, however, is modern and well-written; one of the editors is the university professor and classicist, Theodoros Stephanopoulos. The section on *Birds* contextualizes Aristophanes' play in its cultural moment and also offers information regarding modern productions of Aristophanes' plays in Greece and Europe. It includes interpretative and grammatical comments and suggests activities by which students may further their understanding of the play. Various pages are adorned with representations of ancient artifacts, such as masks, and of modern comics inspired by the plot of *Birds*.

The latest school text of Aristophanes for high schools in Cyprus, intended for the students in the third year of Gymnasium, contains *Clouds*. It was published by the Cypriot Ministry of Education in 2013, and it marks the first time that Aristophanes has been part of the school curriculum in Cyprus. The teaching of *Clouds* is compulsory and not optional. The editor, the classicist and university teacher Antonis Petrides, has produced a textbook marked by high scholarly standards but also well-adapted to modern pedagogical strategies. Essays and comments instruct students about Aristophanes' times and explain the structure of ancient comedy and the meaning of the choral songs (among other things). The reception of Aristophanes in modern Greece, Cyprus, and Europe, including Potamitis' production, is an essential feature of the book. Nevertheless, this edition too had to make concessions. Once again, Stavrou's translation is the one approved by the educational authorities, and Petrides often has to explain words in the translation that today's students would not readily understand.

The inclusion of *Birds* and *Clouds* indicates real progress in the modern Greek educational system's approach to Aristophanes. Nevertheless, the use of translations with which students are out of touch suggests that even in the twenty-first century, Aristophanic comedy is considered inappropriate unless it is suitably filtered and adapted. Furthermore, the textbooks remain faithful to the tradition of the "Byzantine triad." The theatrical productions for children, including those mounted in the schools, by contrast, were more innovative, imaginative, and daring, despite the toning down of obscenity and sexual references. When it comes to young people's experience of Aristophanes, it must be concluded that he comes alive more on the stage than as a set text for classroom readers.

Teaching Aristophanes in the American College Classroom

John Given and Ralph M. Rosen

The undergraduate classroom stands as the most common and yet most under-studied site for the reception of Aristophanes. Every semester, thousands of students at colleges and universities read Aristophanes' comedies, the majority in translation, especially in general education courses. This chapter, co-authored by one scholar at a research university and one at a regional state university, considers the place of teaching translated Aristophanes in an American university curriculum. While we are not unaware of how much the history of scholarship impacts the reception of Aristophanes, including in the undergraduate classroom, we concentrate here on the institutional, curricular, and pedagogical factors that affect classroom reception. The primary mode for teaching Aristophanes is historicist, a mode shaped by general education policies at American universities and also by the available translations of Aristophanes' comedies. Students are asked to study Aristophanes' plays in fifth-century political, philosophical, dramatic, and literary contexts. Such historicist education is, to be sure, a worthwhile goal, but it excludes other possible pedagogical modes that recent work in reception, translation, and performance studies makes possible. After sketching some general background about institutional and curricular matters in the first third of the chapter, we offer an account of other pedagogical strategies based on our own experiences teaching Aristophanes, the first (Rosen) in a cross-cultural course called *Scandalous Arts in Ancient and Modern Society*, the second (Given) in a fully staged student performance of *Lysistrata*.

The reception of Aristophanes in the undergraduate classroom can be understood in the context of a distinctively American holistic education. An unscientific survey of classes that assigned Aristophanes' comedies reveals his plays are used in classical studies courses, as well as in history, comparative literature, theatre, philosophy, English, political science, international studies and general humanities courses.¹ Although it is not always explicit in the

¹ The survey, conducted in December 2014–January 2015, used internet search engines to locate undergraduate syllabi publicly posted on college and university websites. It focused on

course syllabi, most of these classes seem to fulfill general education requirements on their campuses. Every U.S. campus structures its general education requirements differently, but there are clear nationwide consistencies, strongly influenced by the standards set by the country's regional accrediting agencies. All accrediting agencies require universities to reserve space in every undergraduate degree program for general education courses. Several of the agencies require general education curricula to be grounded in the traditional disciplines of the humanities and arts, the social sciences, and the natural sciences.² Even when the accreditation standards do not define the general education curriculum by disciplinary boundaries, they demand that the curriculum prepare students for diverse cultural contexts.³ Most often, assessment of these requirements occurs through measuring core competencies, which include oral and written communication and critical thinking. Through these requirements, the agencies assert that twenty-first-century students must be able to function in a globalized world. The key to success, they say, is the ability to comprehend, evaluate, and communicate information in diverse social and cultural contexts. Information is not to be ripped from its social and cultural origins; it is to be respected and interpreted within its culture in order to allow people around the globe to communicate interculturally. Though only occasionally stated, empathy is a *sine qua non* of global communication competency.

courses offered at U.S. colleges and universities within the last 15 years. Data were collected from about five dozen syllabi. Schools included all types of U.S. colleges and universities, from small liberal arts colleges to major research universities, both private and public, from all regions of the country. While the survey relies on chance with regard to which syllabi happened to be posted on public websites, the consistency of the data across institution types, geographical regions, and course levels suggests that it successfully captured current trends in the reception of Aristophanes in U.S. undergraduate classrooms, at least apropos of the questions posed here about teaching Aristophanes in English translation.

- 2 See the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), Standards 4.16–4.19: <<https://cihe.neasc.org/standard-policies/standards-accreditation/standards-effective-july-1-2011>>; and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), Core Requirement 2.7.3 <<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2012PrinciplesOfAcreditation.pdf>> accessed 15 January 2016.
- 3 For example, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) calls for “expanding [students’] cultural and global awareness and sensitivity” (Standard 12) <<http://www.msche.org/publications/CHX-2011-WEB.pdf>>. The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) requires that the institution’s curriculum “recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work” (Criterion 3.B.4) <<http://www.ncahlc.org/Criteria-Eligibility-and-Candidacy/criteria-and-core-components.html>> accessed 15 January 2016.

To judge from the syllabi collected in our survey, faculty most often teach classical texts in the context of the culture that produced them. One clear reason for this trend is so that courses satisfy their universities' general education requirements as enforced by the regional accrediting agencies. Classical texts are useful vis-à-vis the general education requirements because they can train students to think not only globally but also historically. Yet there are also reasons that spring from the nature of the discipline of classical studies itself. The centrality of learning the Greek and Latin languages, and specifically fifth- and fourth-century BC Attic Greek and first-century BC and first-century AD Latin, focuses classics curricula on literary texts and the eras in which they were produced. Mastering the languages goes hand in hand with mastering the cultures that used the languages. The demand for close philological reading transfers easily to a demand for close literary reading in upper-level language classes, where students are expected to observe key lexical, syntactic, metrical, and rhetorical features across a text and between texts. Standard classroom commentaries highlight such features and encourage students to understand literature through them. Even as we move into an age of digital humanities, new online resources such as the Dickinson College Commentaries maintain the familiar emphases.⁴ This is, of course, not to deny that instructors bring sophisticated theoretical approaches to the study of classical literature in Greek and Latin, nor is it to assert that there is a binary opposition between philology and theory. The point is that the long-standing methods of teaching the languages along with the standard elementary textbooks and classroom commentaries encourage students first to understand literary meaning through close reading as a construct of linguistic and literary context. The step from linguistic and literary context to historical and cultural context is small.

This focus carries over into courses in translation, where Aristophanes is taught in genre classes on ancient drama, comedy, or satire; introductions to Greek civilization; surveys of Greek literature; and topical courses such as sex and gender in the ancient world, all of which use Aristophanes' plays as required texts. Even outside classics departments, Aristophanes tends to be assigned in courses about ancient Greece. Philosophers use *Clouds* in conjunction with Plato's Socratic dialogues in their ancient philosophy courses. Political scientists and historians use *Wasps* or *Ecclesiazusae* to introduce Athenian

4 The Dickinson College Commentaries <<http://dcc.dickinson.edu/>> are online classical texts accompanied by learning aids that include commentary, grammatical notes, vocabulary, maps, photographs, audio tutorials, and video presentations. The DCC resources make the step from linguistic and literary context to historical and cultural context, described above, even smaller.

political institutions. Theatre faculty use Aristophanes' plays at the beginning of their surveys of theatre history. Although it may be an accident of availability, our syllabus survey could not find examples of faculty using Aristophanes in courses not focused on ancient Greece or on a purposely historical survey. In this regard, Rosen's course, *Scandalous Arts in Ancient and Modern Society*, to be described below, seems unique. As a result, whether because of general education's emphasis on empathetic, contextualized, global communication or because of the discipline's typical focus on close reading and textual analysis—or both—U.S. undergraduates most often encounter Aristophanes as a representative of classical literature, history, or culture. His plays are artifacts firmly grounded in the fifth and fourth centuries; students receive the message that the comedies are best understood, and perhaps only understood, alongside their classical literary siblings, as part of the sweep of classical history, or as a contribution to and/or reflection of ancient Greek cultural practices.

In addition to general education requirements and disciplinary traditions, modern translation practices also drive historicist reading in the classroom. The most commonly adopted translations privilege linguistic accuracy over other possible values. Thus, Alan Sommerstein, in his preface to his Penguin edition of *Lysistrata*, *Acharnians* and *Clouds*, says his translation “makes an effort to be a faithful rendering and at the same time ‘both readable and actable,’”⁵ where “readable and actable” seems to mean not so much “crafted for the practical reality of the modern stage” but “easily enunciated.” Paul Roche describes a slightly more liberal approach to his translation of Aristophanes' complete plays. He notes that sometimes the translator needs to insert a phrase or sentence not found in the Greek text, a decision which he says is “not necessarily” unfaithful to Aristophanes' text, since “one is trying to bring over not only words but thoughts, feelings, and connotations, which the words themselves sometimes merely adumbrate.” Even as Roche explains why his translations contain a few elements not found in Aristophanes' Greek, he seems apologetic that the translation of “thoughts” and “feelings” requires unfaithfulness to the text. He calls it a “pitfall” when the translator must supplement the literal meaning of the Greek and thus “has leapt from the legitimate boundaries of translation and landed in the realm of mere paraphrase.”⁶ Both Sommerstein and Roche focus their acts of translation on words, meanings, and sounds at

5 Sommerstein (1973a) 36, quoting Barrett (1964) 30. Cf. Sommerstein (2002b) 2–3: the revised edition maintains its adherence to the principle of faithfulness. For more on translations of Aristophanes, see Wyles, Walsh, and Baker in this volume.

6 Roche (2005) xvii.

the sentence-level. Departure from this focus, especially for Roche (“mere paraphrase”), constitutes a diminution of the translation. Such an approach best enables teachers and students to study Aristophanes through techniques of close reading and to place him rightly in his historical context. Students can be confident that almost everything they see in the translation derives from a Greek word or sentence in Aristophanes’ Greek. A good footnote can be used to bridge the distance between a confusing turn of phrase or an alien historical term and the reader’s comprehension.

Stephen Halliwell makes his historicist purpose explicit in his Oxford World Classics translation of *Birds and Other Plays*:

...[this] translation has been guided by the conviction that, while it is desirable to make Aristophanes as accessible as possible, accessibility must involve access *to* something that is not our own (rather than a modern substitute for it). The comic pleasure which can still be obtained from these plays by modern readers depends on a willingness to participate in a well-informed experience of a historically different, even alien, mode of drama.⁷

Aristophanes’ cultural capital and thus his educational value lie in his otherness. Halliwell assumes that his readers’ purpose in approaching Aristophanes—and he writes specifically for readers, not for a theater audience—is to gain “access” to something “not our own.” Comic pleasure, if it results, comes through education and effort. Content and form ought not to be assimilated to modern conventions to make Aristophanes more comprehensible. Halliwell thus justifies his decision, for example, to bring over Aristophanes’ metrical and linguistic complexities into the English translation. The result is a highly successful translation that gives readers and students sharp insight into Athenian comedy and its conventions. By accessing the text’s otherness in all its literary, historical, and cultural complexity, readers may step outside of their parochial viewpoints and gain the empathetic skills necessary, according to U.S. general education standards, for cross-cultural communication. Aristophanes may prove particularly useful in the endeavor. Even as his views on poverty and peace can provoke strong (if superficial) sympathy in modern democracies, much of his humor seems incomprehensibly foreign. Readers must self-consciously reconcile the comic otherness with the political familiarity in order to make them comprehensible together.

Questions remain, though. Even as we use translations in the classroom, is “access” the best description of the experience we seek for our students? Are

7 Halliwell (1998a) xlviii.

factual knowledge of the classical world and “well-informed” experiences of its literature the only legitimate pedagogical goals? Is it in fact a faithful translation of Aristophanes that ensures our students read him intelligently? That is, is it correctly assumed that our students need to be better educated than the real-life Dicaeopolises and Trygaeuses of the fifth century? Do we lose something essential in Aristophanes by making footnotes necessary for comprehension of the humor?

A translation, *pace* Halliwell, is precisely a substitute. It stands in for the original-language text when readers are unable to understand the source language. As such, according to one strand of translation theory, readers ought to be able to read the translation and not detect the fact that it is a translation. If one of the purposes of translation is to give readers access to the foreign text in their own language, i.e., to allow readers to experience the foreign text as the source language’s readers experience it, then foreignness should be eliminated from the translation as much as possible. Foreignness is not present in the original text and so should not be present in a translation.⁸ Some translations of Aristophanes have attempted to elide some of the foreign aspects of Aristophanes’ comedies and to make them more familiar to contemporary readers. The translations by Douglass Parker and those in the Penn Greek Drama Series edited by David R. Slavitt and Palmer Bovie take up this challenge, though hardly radically. Our syllabus survey, though, shows that these translations are adopted far less frequently than the more historicist translations. University faculty demonstrate their pedagogical purposes with their book orders. They want students to learn about Aristophanes in the cultural context of fifth- and fourth-century Athens and thereby to learn about the ancient Greek world.

There are other possible choices, for translation and for teaching. The pedagogical examples we provide here focus on two alternatives. First, Rosen deploys Aristophanes in *Scandalous Arts in Ancient and Modern Society* as a means of getting students to think about aesthetics and public policy. His is primarily a non-historicist use of Aristophanic comedy. Second, Given discusses his production of *Lysistrata* as an opportunity for his students to engage in the process of reception. His approach can be described as semi-historicist, since he unabashedly altered some aspects of the play to communicate more effectively with his audiences and sought to bring out meanings unavailable to Aristophanes’ fifth-century audience, and yet he worked with his actors to find the effectiveness of Aristophanes’ own structural patterns. Both of us have recognized academic value in Aristophanes’ plays beyond studying them as artifacts of the fifth and fourth centuries.

8 On translations as substitutes and the illegitimacy of foreignness, cf. Bellos (2011) 37–59.

Our pedagogical work builds on recent trends in scholarship in reception, performance, and translation. Michael Silk, for example, using Dryden's classification of translations—metaphrase (word-by-word or line-by-line translation), paraphrase (translating sense rather than words), and imitation (creation of a new equivalent to the original)—notes that most academic translations hover between metaphrase and paraphrase and so can be praised for their accuracy. He counters, “I wish to argue for the value, including the academic value, of creative paraphrase-imitation, and, equally, of its equivalent in the sphere of performance.” He contends that metaphrase-paraphrase translation foregrounds a text's contents, but thereby neglects creating “an equivalent *dynamic* and *impact*,” which a paraphrase-imitation translation can foster.⁹ To counter the translators' contentions noted above, Aristophanes' comedies may provide access to the ancient world, but they may equally and legitimately shape the contemporary world. Students and teachers of Aristophanes need not (only) contemplate a foreign world through a distance of time and space. They need not (only) treat the classical world as a stationary relic to be observed and learned. The amusement of Aristophanes' plays need not be understood and experienced (only) by placing his jokes and situations into their original cultural context. Silk's words remind us that the creation of meaning and knowledge is a two-way street. We study Aristophanes, but his plays also bring themselves to us and make themselves felt, often in ways that will lie undiscovered through a purely historicist lens. Meaning and knowledge discovered by turning our attention to the reception of Aristophanes' comedies are no less valuable than historical knowledge. Thus, translations—and classrooms—need to allow for non-historicist modes of reception. “Mere paraphrase” need not be lamented. Students can be taught that translations can translate more than the metaphrased meanings of words or the paraphrased meanings of thoughts and feelings. In the case studies that follow, we hope to demonstrate this broader academic value as it applies to the undergraduate experience.

Aristophanes, Aesthetic Polarities, and the Culture Wars of the Late Twentieth Century (Rosen)

My usual approach to Greek and Roman authors in the classroom is historicist. I assume my students take courses on classical authors because at some basic level they are hungry for historical knowledge and interested in learning

9 Silk (2007) 287–8.

how one goes about recovering, (re)constructing and imagining the past. One course, however—*Scandalous Arts in Ancient and Modern Society*¹⁰—has been the conspicuous exception. I suppose I would not explicitly describe the class as *anti*-historicist, but I make it clear from the beginning that it has very little to do with history as such. Although I do want the students to have an understanding of basic chronological parameters and a few historical “facts” as a scaffolding for the comparative work we do in the course, such requirements are minimal. If they can place the ancient authors we study along a basic historical timeline, and articulate correctly, if asked, at least a relative chronology of texts, I am satisfied. I want them to remember, for example, that Aristophanes wrote in Greek or that Martial wrote in Latin, and that there are five hundred years between them, but I ask little more of them as far as “facts” go. Many readers may well regard this as a laughably low bar for college-level students, but as I hope will become clear in what follows, worrying much more about history and chronology would simply be a distraction from the main goal of this class, which is to inspire students to think deeply about large, interrelated questions of aesthetics, cultural mores, social decorum, and public policy—across time, to be sure, but especially in our own era.

Let me describe the rationale and basic content of the course before I turn specifically to a discussion of how Aristophanes figures in it as a foundational author exemplary of its central concerns. *Scandalous Arts* examines forms of artistic expression (including literary, visual, and musical media) which are deemed at certain historical moments to transgress the boundaries of taste, convention, religious scruple, or any number of other boundaries that human societies tend to draw to maintain a sense of communal identity and social stability. We consider the various criteria people invoke when evaluating such material, and the premises or cultural conditions underlying such criteria. For the students it is instructive simply for them to realize not only that these are very old debates, but that contours of such debates are often very similar, despite contingencies of time or place. We are certainly not the only culture to worry about such concepts as obscenity and pornography, for example, or about the power and influence that language, image, and music could have over a society. Students are surprised to encounter such anxieties as early as Heraclitus’ famous pronouncement that “Homer deserves to be expelled from the competition and beaten with a staff—and Archilochus too!” (fr. 12B42 D-K). If they have not yet encountered Archilochus (though they do soon enough in this course), they certainly know that we are supposed to revere Homer as a canonical “classic.” Plato himself admired both these poets, and yet he too, of

10 Hereafter abbreviated as *Scandalous Arts*.

course, a century after Heraclitus, famously complained in the *Republic* that this kind of poetry was often unsuitable for public consumption. Clearly a debate very familiar to us was already evolving in ancient Greece: What is the appropriate relationship between art and society? What effect does art have on individuals and communities? What criteria do we apply in deciding whether art is socially acceptable or if it has positive value for society?

In comparing historical conceptions of scandalous art with modern and contemporary ones, students quickly encounter another through-line of the course, namely, the powerful force of “classicizing.” Designating a work “classic” in our own era bestows on it a status of authority or legitimacy that tends to indemnify it against criticism. Past cultures have left us many works of literature and art that were scandalous in their own time, but in later periods became classicized when the qualities that originally made them scandalous lost their cultural immediacy or relevance. This explains why, for example, a volume of Catullus, for all his obscenity and scatology, is easier to slip into a school library today than a copy of J.D. Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye*.¹¹ Approaching the issue of scandalous art, then, through historical juxtaposition encourages the students to consider why some communities turn certain texts and objects into “classics,” while others demonize and censor them.

The students get a good sampling of Greek pornographic vases, obscene poetry by Greek and Roman authors, and even some analogues in Lord Rochester’s (John Wilmot) seventeenth-century classically-inflected scurrilous and satirical verse (along with Johnny Depp’s portrayal of Rochester in the 2004 film, *The Libertine*) or John Cleland’s eighteenth-century pornographic novel *Fanny Hill*, and consider what it means for us to have turned such works into “classics.”¹² At the same time they compare such “classics” to similarly controversial works of our own period—the pornography-inflected work, for example, of painters John Currin and Jeff Koons or photographer Robert Mapplethorpe; the graphic, often obscene and violent lyrics of gangsta rap;¹³ or even modern “classics” that can still stir up controversy, such as Nabokov’s *Lolita* or the novels of William S. Burroughs. Time and again in

11 See, for instance, Pinsker and Pinsker (2007) 27–74, which traces the book’s history of censorship.

12 Students are always amused to learn that there are two recent editions of *Fanny Hill*, or *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* in distinguished series devoted to “classics”: an edition in the Penguin Classics series (Wagner (1986)), and another published as one of the Oxford World Classics (Sabor (2008)).

13 For classicizing interventions on this topic, see Rosen and Marks (1999), Rosen and Baines (2002), and Padilla Peralta (2015).

studying the critical reception of such works, both for and against, one finds invocations of classicizing with specific origins in Greco-Roman cultural history. The infamous Mapplethorpe “Self-portrait with Whip, 1978,” for example, was defended in court on the grounds that it was a “figure study,” that it was “almost classical”¹⁴—in short, on aesthetic grounds that we have inherited (with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century mediation) from classical artists and theorists.¹⁵ But invoking formal or historical criteria for aesthetic value always dances around questions of content and meaning, and almost always fails to satisfy detractors of controversial art who are simply offended or repulsed by what they see, hear or read.

The arts that clash most directly with tastes and mores are the ones that force citizens to articulate philosophically not only the role of art in society, but also the very nature of aesthetics, and the conflict between the cultivation of the self and one’s desires, and social responsibility. Such arts put any democratic ideology to the supreme test with grand, if familiar, questions: democracies may endorse in the abstract freedom of expression, but should the people, the *demos*, ever impose limitations on such freedom, and if so, in the name of what? Such controversies often begin in the realm of the arts, but they quickly intersect with a host of other areas, both private and public, and it is at this point of intersection that Aristophanes plays a central role in laying the groundwork for a discussion of tensions in *Scandalous Arts*.

I introduce Aristophanes in the early weeks of the semester as the centerpiece of three foundational texts (the third being more an “intervention” than a text) which anchor our discussions of all the other material in the course: (1) Plato’s *Republic* II and III, (2) the ἀγῶνες (“contests”) of Aristophanes’ *Clouds* and *Frogs*,¹⁶ and (3) an “interview” from 1986 with musician/composer (and free speech activist) Frank Zappa. The first will come as no surprise to readers of this essay—Plato’s famous “banishment of the poets” from his idealized state is an obvious choice if one is looking for an ancient formulation of the big questions of art and society, although I am continually surprised myself

14 See Janet Kardon (then director at the University of Pennsylvania’s Institute for Contemporary Art) quoted in Merkel (1990).

15 For the conceptual background to our notions of the “classical,” especially to the more casual ways in which “classical” is invoked outside of academic circles, see, e.g., Porter (2005a) (reworked as Porter (2005b) 1–65). I have found that this brilliant essay, though dense and complex, can be surprisingly inspiring to the right kind of student, though I do not assign it in *Scandalous Arts*.

16 Students are assigned to read both *Clouds* and *Frogs* in their entirety, although we focus mainly on the ἀγῶνες in class.

at just *how* rich and nuanced this section of the *Republic* is on aesthetic theory. For readers in western democracies, of course, Plato's proposals for strict state regulation of the arts can be unsettling and students react in predictably negative ways, but my main goal in presenting this material is to help them appreciate how Plato has pinpointed the complex ways in which aesthetics, taste, community values, and politics always interact.

The Aristophanic ἀγῶνες work well immediately following *Republic* II and III, since they dramatize perfectly, and so engagingly, the tensions and polarities that Plato lays out more systematically and abstractly a generation later. More significantly, the ἀγῶνες also allow for illuminating comparison with our own attempts to grapple with similar issues of education and aesthetics, and their intersection with questions of personal and public responsibility. I present the ἀγῶνες of *Clouds* and *Frogs* as variations on the same set of themes, but from different perspectives. At the most basic level, of course, both ἀγῶνες project a standard comic antagonism between “Old” and “New” generations, but from this generalized starting point, a striking number of further polarities arise. And it is precisely through this list of polarities that we can easily see our way to cultural conditions of our own day. In a classroom context, one can schematize the two ἀγῶνες on a blackboard with ancient and modern polarities side by side, and students can get a history lesson in American cultural politics of the past thirty years along the way. By reading selections from prominent figures of 1980's “culture wars”—Allan Bloom, for example, William Bennett, or Martha Nussbaum, among others—students come to understand that the various positions they each represented map with uncanny precision on to the positions of Κρείττων Λόγος (“Stronger Argument”) and Ἡττων Λόγος (“Weaker Argument”) in *Clouds* or Aeschylus and Euripides in *Frogs*.¹⁷ At the heart of each ἀγών, after all, lies a tension between essentialism and contingency, as we have come to call it, which certainly had its roots in Plato and remains the cornerstone of cultural debates today.

Old vs. New, moral stability vs. relativism, autocracy vs. democracy, elitism vs. populism—the list extends to many more areas of life, as Aristophanes himself seems to have understood. The ἀγών of *Clouds* may be concerned most immediately with Athenian modes of education, but Κρείττων Λόγος and Ἡττων Λόγος resonate throughout as character types that are perennially associated with sides taken in all of these polarities. In Aristophanes these are exaggerated comic caricatures, but, like most caricatures, they have their

17 Bloom (1987), with Martha Nussbaum's review (1987); Bennett (1992). Also useful for the students are selections from Hunter (1991), which attempts, at least, to remain non-partisan and objective, and the very partisan, but direct and emblematic, Helms (1994).

origins in the real world, real people who take themselves and their positions seriously. The character types ridiculed by the two *Λόγοι* ("Arguments") in *Clouds* hold views that are replicated later in the *ἄγων* of *Frogs*, where Aeschylus and Euripides play out a similar set of opposing positions. In that play, however, Aristophanes packages these antagonisms with a new spin, related more to aesthetics than pedagogy. But the fundamental tension we saw in *Clouds* between traditionalism and progressivism, between elitism and populism, remains intact: Aeschylus, like *Κρείττων Λόγος*, argues for conservative, transcendent values which, he believes, the best poets should promote in their work; Euripides, aligned elsewhere in *Frogs* with contemporary sophists (as in the chorus's final song, 1491–9) and so with the *Ἥττων Λόγος* of *Clouds*, famously describes his own poetry as *δημοκρατικόν* (952), a word we might translate as "populist" or "empowering the people."

Again, these are imprecise caricatures, but they reflect stereotypes which are readily paralleled in our own culture. The *ἄγων* of *Frogs*, in particular, offers easy access to the "canon wars" of the 1980s, when battle lines were drawn between those we might call "Aeschyleans," who believe in the transcendent value of traditional literary canons, and "Euripideans," who argued that literary value was culturally contingent and, as a consequence, that canons could and should be reformed in keeping with changing values and tastes. Traditionalists of our own day tend to stress the grandeur, sublimity, and transcendence of great literature, along with its exemplarity and didactic function, just as Aeschylus proclaims that great tragedy should inspire and elevate audiences with powerful, "grand" language (see, e.g., *Frogs* 1039–62). Whenever literature and art begin to veer towards the scandalous, each of these positions—the Aeschylean and Euripidean—becomes stressed. Scandalous art forces readers and audiences, after all, to take a position on its aesthetic value in a way that non-scandalous art usually does not. Since such art is offensive to some people, those who enjoy it must defend their position, often publicly, and this forces a conversation about the criteria for aesthetic judgment and the nature of taste.

The passages from Plato and Aristophanes that students read during the early weeks of *Scandalous Arts* offer a clear and nuanced introduction to the kinds of questions that they will encounter throughout their lives. Hardly a month goes by without another news story about threats to the production and dissemination of controversial art, whether through outright censorship, de-funding, or simply bad critical press. Taking a position on such art means confronting all the questions so well-articulated by Plato's Socrates in *Republic* II and III, and by the antagonists of both Aristophanic contests: Will such art harm children? When are children old enough to distinguish between artistic fictionality and reality? Should all audiences be treated, by

default, as children, i.e., as creatures with vulnerable and fragile psyches? To invoke Wendy Steiner's formulation in her book, *The Scandal of Pleasure*, why is artistic representation (Plato's *μίμησις*) so often confused with "advocacy?"¹⁸ Aristophanes' Aeschylus certainly had such questions on his mind when he accused Euripides of inspiring Athenian women to give in to illicit passion or even suicide. Aeschylus and Euripides sparred over the social and psychological effects of Greek tragedy, while we continually fret over the effects of violence in television or cinema, pornography, or "bad language" on the radio or in books.

Reading Aristophanes in the classroom, of course, and in translation, can still feel like an artificial exercise to many students, however much they can enjoy the comic brilliance of the *ἀγῶνες*. This is why I have found it extremely effective to follow the *ἀγῶνες* immediately with an Aristophanic figure of more recent history, the composer and musician Frank Zappa (1940–93). During the most fraught years of the 1980s "culture wars," Zappa emerged as an outspoken activist for free speech, continually pushing back against efforts of the U.S. government to regulate pop music record sales with warning labels and banning threats.¹⁹ His political work on this issue was serious enough, but he deployed his skills as a parodist and satirist to good advantage in service to the cause. His appearance on an episode of the television show, *Crossfire*, on March 28, 1986, may come as close to an Aristophanic *ἀγών* as one is likely to find in the modern era, and makes for a most revealing comparison with *Clouds* and *Frogs*. In this show, readily accessible today online, Zappa was invited to debate the specific question of whether warning labels should be placed on the compact disc by the artist, Prince, that contained a song called "Sister," supposed to be about incest. Although there were three conservative panelists sitting around Zappa, his main antagonist was the ultra-conservative commentator John

18 Steiner (1995) 5. In general, see also Heins (2007).

19 The most famous U.S. Senate hearings occurred in September 18, 1985, addressing the "contents of music and the lyrics of records." The hearings were initiated by a group called Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC). Zappa was among the celebrity witnesses from the music industry, whose position was stated clearly at the beginning of his testimony: "The PMRC proposal is an ill-conceived piece of nonsense which fails to deliver any real benefits to children, infringes the civil liberties of people who are not children, and promises to keep the courts busy for years dealing with the interpretational and enforcement [*sic*] problems inherent in the proposal's design . . . It is my understanding that in law First Amendment issues are decided with a preference for the least restrictive alternative. In this context, the PMRC demands are the equivalent of treating dandruff by decapitation" (*Record Labeling* (1985) 52).

Lofton. We need not rehearse the details of the encounter here, except to point out the Aristophanic qualities of the entire encounter. Lofton was strident and blustery in his moral outrage, a veritable caricature of the positions that less histrionic conservatives might hold. Zappa, in his turn, was calmer, but also indignant and ready to match barb for barb, always insistent that *words* (or in this case, “song lyrics”) are innocuous in virtually all circumstances. His interaction with Lofton included such memorable retorts as “I love it when you froth like that . . .” and “kiss my ass.” Zappa’s prescient (depending on one’s political views . . .) and ominous prediction that (in 1986) America was heading towards a “fascist theocracy” was proclaimed with dead seriousness, but the context was suffused with irony and sarcasm on both sides, and it would be difficult to describe the show as anything other than comic. Students enjoy this clip enormously, as it essentially offers them an updated and fully accessible variation on an Aristophanic ἀγών—bursting with invective, mockery, sarcasm, irony, and parody, but all the while tossing about contemporary aesthetic and political issues that were at the same time being debated, and taken very seriously, in less comic and theatrical contexts. Finally, the character-types represented by Zappa and Lofton in this show are such extremes that it is easy for students to map on to them the other extreme characters they saw in the Aristophanic ἀγῶνες, or even in Plato. Lofton becomes a peculiar mixture of the censorious, moralistic Socrates (though far more emotional and obviously a lesser mind) and the priggish Κρείττων Λόγος of *Clouds*; if Lofton were pressed about “great music” or “literature” on that show, he would almost certainly have come across as “Aeschylean,” advocating for the grandeur and timelessness of canonical artists. Zappa is more the populist, the “Euripidean,” questioning, like Euripides, traditional theology, and respectful of the intelligence of the δῆμος in ways that his sanctimonious sparring partners were not.

As should be obvious at this point, the Aristophanes who makes his appearance in *Scandalous Arts* is not a deeply historicized figure. Students know he is “ancient” and that he worked in a period of great intellectual creativity and political controversy; I doubt they will retain much more detail about Aristophanes than that, though during the course of the term I do have plenty of other things to say about him. But what I do hope they take with them throughout their lives is a better understanding of how aesthetic issues inevitably intersect with the political, social, and even psychological. This strikes me as not too far, at any rate, from what I imagine Aristophanes would want his audiences to take away from *Frogs*—an appreciation of just how complex aesthetic evaluation is, and a willingness to ask what unstated premises and fears prompt a society to judge certain works of arts offensive or dangerous.

Students' Acts of Reception: *Lysistrata* (Given)

I have directed three productions of classical plays with mostly undergraduate actors and crews at my home campus, East Carolina University: *Lysistrata*, 2010; *The Brothers Menaechmus*, 2011; and *Oedipus Rex*, 2013.²⁰ Each play was presented in a three-performance run in a single spring weekend: *Lysistrata* and *Oedipus Rex* on a makeshift stage set up in a large student union meeting room, *The Brothers Menaechmus* on the stage of our School of Music's recital hall. The cast and crew of *Lysistrata*, my subject here, included seventeen undergraduates, two graduate students, one community member, one alumna, and two faculty members. The productions' purposes and goals were numerous. They formed part of my own ongoing research agenda in the performance and reception of ancient drama. They raised the Classical Studies Program's visibility on campus, and increased the number of students enrolled in our classes and declared as majors and minors. They educated the campus community about the continuing vitality of classical theatre and more generally increased knowledge of classical literature and culture. And, as is relevant here, they brought groups of student actors and designers to a sophisticated level of knowledge regarding the content, themes, and structures of ancient dramas. In this section, I explore aspects of our production of *Lysistrata* that would not have been fully possible in the classroom, with particular attention to how the rehearsal process shaped student learning and how students thus came to participate in the play's reception.

Our production premiered an unpublished translation by Peter Green, the esteemed ancient historian, cultural critic, and translator who was resident at East Carolina at the time. As we described in the first section of this chapter, there can be more to translation than carrying over the meanings of the words and sentences. Walton opines that a translator is a collaborator with the director, designers, and actors, and is responsible for making evident that ancient playwrights were "effective makers of plays."²¹ If a translation skews a script so that it is no longer an effective piece of stagecraft, then it is partially a failure. Green, an experienced theatre practitioner himself, wrote a script that took several steps toward making *Lysistrata* an effective piece of

20 Details on these and other events in East Carolina University's Classics Performance Series can be found at <<http://www.ecu.edu/classics/performance.cfm>> accessed 15 January 2016. I have also written about the production of *Lysistrata* at Given (2011), where my focus was on the scholarly research and the collaborative decisions that shaped the Reconciliation scene. See also Robson in this volume.

21 Walton (2006) 15.

contemporary stagecraft. I will name two examples, one small and one large. First, he broke the play into two acts between lines 613 and 614, and translated Lysistrata's lines ἀλλ' εἰς τρίτην γοῦν ἡμέραν σοι πρὶ πάνυ / ἤξει παρ' ἡμῶν τὰ τρίτ' ἐπεσκευασμένα (612–3), addressed to the Proboulos as he is carried off, with, "Anyway, day after tomorrow, bright and early, we'll be there with the proper third-day offerings! [*To herself and the audience*] Right. Dance on your fucking grave."²² Lysistrata still gets her bitter lines to the Proboulos.²³ With the turn to the audience and the interpolated obscenity, though, the lines become a curtain-closing triumph.²⁴ Lysistrata has defeated the Proboulos, and she is ushered offstage by the audience's congratulatory applause. Second, as other translators of Greek plays have done, Green divided the chorus (or, in this case, the two semi-choruses) into individual speaking roles. In doing so, though, he managed to retain the sense that these people remain generic representatives of ordinary Athenians. His careful distribution of lines gave the actors sufficient guidance to construct character. It felt like each person was an individual who had experienced the war from his or her own unique perspective. Yet we never learned any biographical or other differentiating information about them. They were generic people with individual personalities, sufficiently realistic to please both actors and audience. No director wants a translation that curtails his or her creativity. Green's translation was mostly faithful to Aristophanes' Greek, but his interventions made it easier for me and my actors to move from page to modern stage because the translation was so attuned to how both Aristophanes' theatre and modern realistic theatre work.

With Green's script in hand, the actors and I spent considerable time in rehearsal finding a pace for the play. Much scholarly expertise has been devoted to Aristophanic formal elements such as choral meters, the internal structuring of ἀγών and parabasis, and so forth. I know of no work, though, on what we might call the flow of the play.²⁵ Any experienced actor will tell you that a well-constructed play engages the audience with deliberately varied

22 Green's act division not only enables the curtain-closing moment described here, but it also gives the impression that time has passed before the semi-choruses' scene beginning at 614. With time having passed, the semi-choruses' increased hostility makes more sense, and the next scene, when several women attempt to escape the Acropolis, also takes on a greater poignancy.

23 One can easily imagine the fifth-century Lysistrata hissing her final ἐπεσκευασμένα as venomously as Medea's sigmatic ἔσωσά σ', ὡς ἴσασιν (Eur. *Medea* 476).

24 My lead actress, Danielle Bryan, drew the audience in even more by adding an emphatic "We'll" before "dance."

25 I adapt the term "flow" loosely from the performance theories of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Richard Schechner calls the same idea "intensity." On both, see Schechner (1985) 11.

levels of intensity. The play builds intensity and then lets the audience rest for a while before building it again. A careful director will pace moments of intensity to give shape to the entire performance. In a comedy, the director aims to build the momentum of the audience's laughter so that each comic height is higher than the one before. Actors too use the play's flow to shape their own performances. An actor's time spent on and off stage, for example, becomes habitual. The actor integrates into his or her performance this accustomed pace of entrances and exits. Flow is one of the basic tools for how a cast communicates with an audience, but it is difficult to judge a play's flow by silently reading a play or even in a table reading. The rehearsal process is necessary for discovering and creating the play's shape, and so philological and literary studies are blind to these aspects of Aristophanes' craftsmanship.

In my experience of other productions of *Lysistrata*, the second half of the play was usually paced around the intensely erotic scene in which Myrrhine performs her striptease to dupe Cinesias into supporting peace, a decision that can cause the play to lose momentum thereafter. My cast and I approached Act II with the intention of discovering a way to build up to the Myrrhine scene without having it be the comic high point. We discovered that our own focus was gravitating toward three moments, all of which foregrounded human bodies: the semi-choruses stripping for inter-choral battle (662–707), the Myrrhine-and-Cinesias scene (829–951), and the moment when the men negotiate peace over and on the body of Reconciliation (1162–88). Aristophanes' script created a good rhythm. Each of these scenes could be played in a growing crescendo, moving from *forte* to *fortissimo*, with pauses to allow the audience to prepare for the next intense moment. The circumstances of our production helped. As it happened, when I did the casting, I had far more women than men to choose from. So both semi-choruses comprised female actors. When the semi-choruses stripped in the first *forte* scene, the female actors of the men's chorus were revealed to be wearing flaccid felt penises, the first (but hardly the last) time the audience had seen the comic phallus. This revelation combined with the stage violence between the semi-choruses created our first comic high point. The Myrrhine-and-Cinesias scene easily topped it to keep the momentum growing.

We then faced a problem. My concept for the production entailed a slight but significant alteration to the Reconciliation scene. In short, Reconciliation was played by a male actor in a nude female body suit, but as the scene progressed, Lysistrata became frustrated that the negotiations were focused on this faux female. She ordered him offstage, dropped her own robe (she was wearing a slip underneath) and inserted herself into Reconciliation's place with the cry, "If we're going to build our new peace on the body of a woman, then it has

to be a real woman.” The negotiators replayed the scene, replacing their hesitant poking of the male Reconciliation with grotesque groping of Lysistrata. The symbolic rape served as a strong critique of Aristophanes’ otherwise easy return to the status quo at the end of the play.²⁶ I designed the scene so that it at first invited uproarious laughter, but in the end only allowed the audience a few nervous, uncomfortable chuckles. In shaping Act II, we needed to build to this moment that undermined the audience’s expectations. In our rehearsals the time between the Myrrhine-and-Cinesias scene and the Reconciliation scene felt too long to sustain the comic momentum. In Aristophanes’ script, an abbreviated parabasis lies between these two scenes, a parabasis that seems far from the comic gems in plays such as *Knights* and *Frogs*, but one that perhaps in the fifth century was able to carry the momentum. To solve our problem, I decided to write a new parabasis. Having asked the chorus actors what they wanted to say to their audience, I wrote a parabasis in which the eight female actors addressed their words to their female peers and discussed the place of sex on a college campus. After rattling off a list of favorite sexual positions and terms for favorite body parts, some of which were too obscene to print even in a book on Aristophanes, the chorus members urged the women in the audience to take control of their sexual relationships, to prize their intellectual talents with as much vigor as they prize their sexuality, and in short to “be real women.” To the men, the women said, “We still want the screw, but when we say, where we say, and how we say.” As a theatrical moment, the parabasis built on Myrrhine’s successful use of her sexuality to gain her political goal. It seized that scene’s comic momentum and increased it. The scene also prominently used the phrase “real women,” anticipating and ironizing Lysistrata’s later use of “real woman” in the Reconciliation scene. In performance, we could feel the audience listening intently to every word of the parabasis. It earned the biggest laughter and applause of the evening. It enabled us to escape the trap of the Myrrhine-and-Cinesias scene being the comic high point, and it created the audience’s (flawed) expectation that the climax of the plot would itself be the climax of the humor.

The collaborative rehearsal process was necessary to achieve the play’s successful flow. There were not decisions that I, as director, had or could have made prior to casting the play. A different cast may have found and created different moments of intensity. I can imagine, for example, a production that eschews the division into acts in order to emphasize connections between Lysistrata’s defeat of the Proboulos and her later skewering of the Spartan and

26 I have written in detail about the literary and political framework for this scene in Given (2011).

Athenian delegates. The unique collaboration among the cast, crew, myself, the translator, and Aristophanes produced the unique production.

It also demonstrated an essential aspect of pedagogical reception. Basic reception theory holds that the meaning of texts changes through time because meaning is necessarily constructed by readers or audiences. Theatre maintains a unique place because we can identify acts of reception by the living collaborators (translator, director, actors, crew) and acts of reception by the audience. By working on a fully staged production of Aristophanes, students recognize the limits of understanding meaning through reading, whether in a classroom or elsewhere. When they engage in a full-length rehearsal process—not just a cold reading or even a briefly rehearsed scene in a classroom—they witness the play's meanings shift as they experiment with different techniques and decide on different approaches. More than simply “getting to know the play better,” they learn about the act of reception itself. They grapple with the semantic indeterminacy of the text and decide which possible meaning(s) they wish to communicate to their audiences, knowing that their audiences will in turn create meanings when they watch the play. Because it is an ancient play, they confront the many problems of transforming a classical text into a comprehensible stage culture.²⁷ They must recognize that a successful production cannot hope to communicate any posited, historically authentic meaning. Even original-practices productions necessarily are acts of reception, not museum pieces preserving ancient wisdom. Instead, students aimed at what Mary-Kay Gamel calls expressive or personal authenticity—that is, an honest expression of oneself as an artist through exploring and widening the latent and potential meanings of the text.²⁸ Our Myrrhine, for example, was played by a petite blonde who grew her character through the course of the play from a badly stereotyped sorority girl to a shrewd woman completely in control of Cinesias. We did not change a single word in any of her scenes. Yet in her striptease scene she came across not as an example of the comically libidinous women scholars see in Aristophanes' text, but as a woman sincerely torn between her reasonable desire for sex and her commitment to Lysistrata's peace plan.²⁹ Her performance created a stage culture, meaningful to our audience, in which women control their own bodies and minds. In the arc

27 On translating ancient stage cultures to modern counterparts, see Walton (2006) 123–4.

28 See Gamel (2013) 185–6. My students also engaged in what Gamel calls processual authenticity, which allows collaborative participants in the theatrical process to express their commitment to the artistic creation by, for example, speaking their own thoughts in a parabasis (Gamel (2013) 187).

29 Cf. Faraone (2006) 209–11; Stroup (2004).

of the story, her performance—her act of reception and her expressive authenticity—perfectly set the stage for the chorus's parabasis and Lysistrata's decision to submit her own body to humiliation in the Reconciliation scene.

Conclusion

The two examples we have described here of teaching Aristophanes show just how versatile he can be in pedagogical contexts. On the one hand, we might see each experience in contrastive terms. Rosen's deliberately synchronic, non-historicist approach pays little attention to Aristophanes "the man of Classical Athens" and re-directs the students' focus from theatrical particularities of a specific time and place to abstract, philosophical topics of our own time. Given, on the other hand, confronts squarely with his students the question of what it means to "perform a play by Aristophanes" in the first place, a question one can only answer by first making crucial decisions about each component of that phrase ("perform" "a play" "by" "Aristophanes"). As Given noted earlier, any modern producer of Aristophanes will need to decide where along a spectrum of "historical accuracy" one wants to situate the production. No matter how experimental or culturally updated a performance is, however, as long as Aristophanes' name is affixed to the production, an audience is invited to think of it as having at least some relationship to its original author and the historical particulars of an original production.

On the surface, then, Given's students seem to take away from their engagement with Aristophanes something rather different from Rosen's. It is certainly likely that any student who has taken an active part in performing an Aristophanic play will "know more" about Aristophanes than those who have spent their time in class comparing the details of an Aristophanic *ἄγων* to modern analogues. But this contrast itself raises an important question: what, after all, do we mean when we speak of "knowing about" Aristophanes, and what are we hoping to achieve by asking students to engage with Aristophanes? How do we compare the experience of learning what an Aristophanic mask "really looked like" in the original production of *Lysistrata* to reaching a belief that one has properly understood what drives a character such as Κρείττων or Ἡττων Λόγος in *Clouds*? We would like to conclude by proposing that such experiences are not, in the end, so distant from each other, and not just because each is capable in its own way of generating a simple antiquarian thrill in at least some students. Such thrills as come from the mere fact of "knowing something about" Aristophanes may be inert and aimless in themselves, but they can also be inspirational for students (and for all readers and audiences,

in fact) when they are encouraged to consider *why* they find such knowledge interesting. This is not always as easy a question to answer as it may seem, but it does seem the case that any attempt to answer it must begin with another question: what does Aristophanes *mean* to me?

As we hope to have shown, there are various ways by which we can encourage students to reflect on Aristophanes—mimetically through performance, for example, or intellectually by abstract analysis—and others will surely add other variations of their own. In the end, however, all these variations have in common a desire to understand a distant past in terms that make sense to ourselves. The same holds for the study of all historical literary figures, but Aristophanes is particularly rich in this regard, as the other essays in this volume have consistently affirmed. We are drawn to his inventive plots, for example, his stylistic versatility, or his serio-comic touch, and we learn much along the way about the particularities of classical Athenian comedy. But we process this knowledge and understand what Aristophanes has to offer us, necessarily, as a function of who—and at what point in human history—we are. Historicist pedagogy remains vital for understanding Aristophanes, but even a historicist approach implies an act of reception in which students become self-aware creators of ongoing meaning as they attempt to situate his work in a specific time and place, and to imagine—mediated by their own subjectivities—what his comedies must have looked and felt like.

The “English Aristophanes”: Fielding, Foote, and Debates over Literary Satire

Matthew J. Kinservik

When discussing comic drama in any era, Aristophanes seems to figure into everything—all comic roads lead back to him. In the introduction to *Aristophanes in Performance*, Edith Hall notes the following:

Precedents for every single tradition of comic theatre and humour in the West have . . . with justification, been identified in Aristophanes: personal satire, philosophical satire, mimicry, parody, puns, *double entendre*, Saturnalian role inversion, Rabelaisian and Bakhtinian carnival, drag acts and cross-dressing, stand-up, bawd and scatology, slapstick, farce and knockabout.¹

As with genre, so with ideology: throughout modern history, radicals and conservatives, alike, have been inclined to invoke Aristophanes as an ancient exemplar of their views. Given this ubiquity and malleability, we ought to tread with some caution when we see his named invoked—especially when we see texts or writers of very different sorts being labeled “Aristophanic.” This is important when considering the comic drama of eighteenth-century England, particularly when trying to make sense of the career of Samuel Foote, a playwright who flourished between the 1740s and 1770s. Foote was so thoroughly identified with his Greek predecessor that he was often referred to as “our Modern Aristophanes” or “the English Aristophanes” or simply “Aristophanes.” But Foote was not the only “English Aristophanes.” That label also belonged to Henry Fielding when he was in his heyday, writing satirical comedies in the 1730s. How could Foote and Fielding both be the “English Aristophanes” when their work was so different?

When first considering this issue in the context of a book-length study of theatrical censorship in eighteenth-century England, I posed the following question:

¹ Hall (2007b) 1.

If both men were Aristophanic satirists, we must pause and wonder why Fielding was locked out of the Little Haymarket in 1737, whereas Foote was given a royal patent to operate the Haymarket in 1766. In other words, what had changed, either in the nature of satire or censorship, to make Aristophanic satire so tolerable by 1766?²

The question is important because being the “English Aristophanes” was a dangerous game for Fielding. Not only did it lead to the untimely end of his theatrical career, but it also contributed to the passage of the Stage Licensing Act of 1737, a heavy-handed censorship measure that was not fully repealed until 1968.³ The story is different for Foote. In his case, assuming the Aristophanic mantle resulted in three decades of theatrical success and the acquisition of a royal patent to operate the Little Theatre in the Haymarket—the very building that Fielding was literally locked out of when the censorship was imposed. The answers I provided to the question focused on comic drama produced in the decades after the passage of the Licensing Act, but they relied upon a fairly narrow conception of what “Aristophanes” meant in the eighteenth century. My aim now is more fully to account for eighteenth-century English attitudes toward Aristophanes and reconsider the significance of both Fielding’s and Foote’s reputations in light of that fuller sense of what “Aristophanes” meant in the period.

Matthew Steggle’s essay, “Aristophanes in Early Modern England,” notes that the old idea that Aristophanes was largely ignored until he was rediscovered in the nineteenth century needs to be discarded. Specifically, he observes that the “reception of Aristophanes is part of a far more complicated cultural picture,” and he goes on to say, “Renaissance culture was interested, quite particularly, in one aspect of Greek Old Comedy: the fact that it offered a precedent for a drama that satirized living people by name on stage.”⁴ There were, of course, sharply differing attitudes toward personal satire, both on the stage and off, in the eighteenth century. And there were correspondingly divergent attitudes toward Aristophanes, and they are significant for us to understand because the more we come to appreciate that there were different conceptions of Aristophanes in eighteenth-century England, the better we can understand the culture’s attitudes toward personal satire and how writers as different as Fielding and Foote each came to be called “the English Aristophanes.”

2 Kinservik (2002) 134.

3 For context on the passage and implementation of the Stage Licensing Act, see Conolly (1976) and Leisenfeld (1984).

4 Steggle (2007) 52.

The Exemplary Aristophanes?

In the "Essay on the Life and Genius of Henry Fielding," published in the first volume of the 1762 *Miscellanies*, Arthur Murphy makes a strong case for Fielding's genius and his worthiness to be memorialized in a collected works. However, this case is not built on the strength of Fielding's drama. When Murphy takes up the issue of Fielding's theatrical career, he notes that no plays have been omitted from the collection; rather, "the *entire theatre of Henry Fielding*" is offered to the public:

For though it must be acknowledged that in the whole collection there are few plays likely to make any considerable figure on the stage hereafter, yet they are worthy of being preserved, being the works of a genius, who in his wildest and most inaccurate productions, yet occasionally displays the talent of a master.⁵

Clearly, this is not the strongest possible praise. Murphy was a playwright, critic, and lawyer who admired Fielding but who had a nuanced sense of the merits of Fielding's work. In the discussion that follows, Murphy explains the basis of this judgment: Fielding's drama is too irregular and topical to have enduring value. Furthermore, his dangerous wit brought down the force of law on him in the shape of the Stage Licensing Act:

...it is said that the wit and humour of our modern *Aristophanes*, Mr. Fielding, whose quarry in some of his pieces, particularly the *Historical Register*, was higher game than in prudence he should have chosen, were principal instruments in provoking that law, under which the British theatre has groaned ever since.⁶

Murphy's treatment is a good place to start because he offers an even-handed assessment of Fielding's dramatic works and because he characterizes Fielding's dramatic career as a modern exemplar of Aristophanic comedy. He was not alone in this judgment. There is a remarkable similarity between Murphy's discussion of Fielding's drama and the commentary offered by the anonymous contributors to the pro-Ministerial newspaper, the *Gazetteer*, in the weeks prior to the passage of the Stage Licensing Act in the late spring of 1737. Writing in support of the censorship legislation, the contributors to

⁵ Murphy (1762) 1.18.

⁶ Murphy (1762) 1.20–1.

the *Gazetteer* focus their attention on Fielding, who had produced a number of essentially plotless satiric revues that contained topical satire and lightly veiled representations of and allusions to real people. These works were produced in the 1730s, a decade of intense partisanship in England and defined by the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole.⁷ Writing in the *Gazetteer*, Walpole's allies criticized Fielding's drama as being too incendiary, too topical, and too partisan to endure as works of literary art. Their commentary was designed to damn Fielding and justify the censorship measures as a reasonable response. This is what makes Murphy's commentary so important: he calls Fielding the "modern Aristophanes" in the context of a lengthy condemnation of the Stage Licensing Act, *but he is not complimenting Fielding*. Rather, he is blaming him for his satiric excesses, just as he then blames Walpole for his censorial excesses. Mimicry in private can be hurtful, but when it is exhibited in "public drolls," those entertainments become downright pernicious. Murphy declares:

Away with them; therefore, they are illiberal, they are unworthy; let licentiousness be banished from the theatres, but let the liberty of the free-born muse be immortal! The true idea of liberty consists in the free and unlimited power of doing whatever shall not injure the civil and religious institutions of the state, nor be deemed invasive of the peace and welfare of our fellow subjects.⁸

This is a rather strong and specific condemnation of Aristophanic satire—and it is always overlooked because the critical presumption is that calling Fielding the "modern Aristophanes" was a compliment. That is certainly the assumption that guided Martin Battestin in his 1989 biography of Fielding and that guided Charles A. Knight, whose essay, "Fielding and Aristophanes," asserts that Fielding had a life-long interest in Aristophanes and shared many comic qualities with him.⁹ Because Battestin was interested in establishing Fielding's *bona fides* as an Opposition writer, the biography presents Aristophanes as an exemplar of the brave satirist who manfully lashes malefactors in public. But as a closer look at Murphy's text shows, calling Fielding the "modern Aristophanes" was a form of censure, not praise.

We can be forgiven for thinking otherwise because Fielding leads us to this erroneous judgment in his own texts. A column (attributed to Fielding by Thomas Lockwood) in the *Daily Journal* of 25 March 1737 warns that the

7 For context on the literary reaction to Walpole's rule, see Goldgar (1976).

8 Murphy (1762) 1.22–23.

9 Knight (1981).

imposition of censorship would "intirely destroy the Old Comedy, which seems at present greatly to flourish, in which we have an Author who is an acknowledged Proficient, and which may be of very signal Service to our Country for Imposture has no greater Enemy than Theatrical Ridicule."¹⁰ Regardless of who wrote the essay, in the spring of 1737, the invocation of the Old Comedy and allusion to an "acknowledged Proficient" can only be meant to invoke Fielding and Aristophanes. A few months later, on 21 May 1737, another column (attributed by Battestin to Fielding) appeared in *Common Sense*. This one defends political satire on the stage and says, "had you ever read *Aristophanes*, you would know that the gravest Matters have been try'd this Way."¹¹ These essays were written in the heat of the debate over the Licensing Act and came at a time when Fielding was producing his most daring political plays. It is a mistake to read backwards from this point and characterize his whole dramatic career as Aristophanic, but the label clearly applies here because Fielding affixed it himself.

A few years after the Licensing Act had passed, but before Walpole fell from power, Fielding and William Young published a prose translation of Aristophanes' *Plutus* (1742). The dedication to Lord Talbot, signed by both Fielding and Young, is noteworthy because the translators dwell at length on Aristophanes' reputation as a poet who speaks truth to power. They praise Aristophanes as one who exerted his "Genius in the Service of his Country. He attack'd and expos'd its Enemies and Betrayers with a Boldness and Integrity, which must endear his Memory to every True and Sincere Patriot."¹² In the preface, they cite Olympiodorus' life of Plato, which claims that Plato greatly admired Aristophanes and learned from him the art of tailoring diction to character in his dialogues. Their mutual esteem was so strong that when Plato died, a volume of Aristophanes' works was found in the philosopher's bed. But what of that other philosopher, who had a less harmonious relationship with Aristophanes? Fielding and Young confront this head-on in a remarkable paragraph:

We know that Plato, in his *Phaedon*, speaks against a Comic Poet with the utmost Vehemence; and, in his *Apology for Socrates*, mentions Aristophanes among his false Accusers by Name; and that Aelian ascribes the Death of Socrates to the Ridicule brought on him by the Comedy of *the Clouds*; with which Diogenes Laertius seems to assent: But we

10 Quoted in Lockwood (1980) 54.

11 Battestin (1989) 537.

12 Fielding and Young (1742) A2r-v.

question not refuting this Story, if ever it be our Fortune to translate that Play.¹³

Unfortunately they never did translate *Clouds*, so their promised defense of Aristophanes' attack on Socrates never materialized.

The question of Aristophanes' merit often rested upon one's attitude toward his treatment of Socrates. Had Fielding and Young produced a defense of Aristophanes on that issue, it is likely that they would have represented the issues in terms similar to Basil Kennett's defense of Aristophanes in *The Lives and Characters of the Ancient Grecian Poets*.¹⁴ Kennett praises his "native Courage and Honour, and his profess'd Aversion to a servile Government," noting that these qualities deserved to "procure him the highest Employments in the State."¹⁵ But he then observes that Aristophanes was more useful to Athens as a dramatist than in any other capacity:

Twas he, that dar'd entertain the whole City at the Expence of the Magistrates Reputations; could inform them of the pernicious Designs of their Leading Officers; and could himself act a *Cleon*, a powerful Villain, when every one of the Common Players declined so dangerous a Part.¹⁶

After this effusive praise, he then addresses the contention with Socrates in a notable passage:

It looks indeed somewhat like a Prodigy, to see the Comedian blacken the incomparable *Socrates*, by representing him as a Despiser of the popular Religion; while he himself, in some other of his Pieces, has expos'd the same vulgar Errors, and came off with Approbation. The Reason of the strange Difference can be only this; that *Aristophanes*, by the Force, and Authority of his Wit, held *Athens* more absolutely at Command, than the good Philosopher, with all his Wisdom, and all his Vertue (125).

Rather than being liable to the charge of hypocrisy, Aristophanes deserves praise for more effectively chastising the Athenians on their popular religious practices. This surprising conclusion is not far from Mark Akenside's controversial defense of ridicule in a note to his popular poem, *The Pleasures of the*

¹³ Fielding and Young (1742) vii.

¹⁴ Kennett (1735) 125.

¹⁵ Kennett (1735) 125.

¹⁶ Kennett (1735) 125.

Imagination (1744). In a long digressive note on "the ridiculous," Akenside argues that although ridicule can be turned to the wrong ends by introducing misleading information, that is no reason to condemn the practice in categorical terms. He specifically mentions Aristophanes, noting that "the Socrates of Aristophanes is as truly ridiculous a character as was ever drawn.—True; but it is not the character of Socrates, the divine moralist and the father of ancient wisdom."¹⁷ Akenside notes that Socrates had every opportunity to defend himself, but that Aristophanes' ridicule prevailed upon the Athenian populace. That may be unfortunate, but it is better to tolerate some unfair ridicule than to lay aside this important tool. Akenside goes on to equate ridicule with reason and to ask the following:

if we must reject the use of ridicule, because by the imposition of false circumstances, things may be made to seem ridiculous, which are not so in themselves; why we ought not in the same manner to reject the use of reason, because by proceeding on false principles, conclusions will appear true which are impossible in nature, let the vehement and obstinate declaimers against ridicule determine.¹⁸

Both Akenside and Kennett address the weakest part of Aristophanes' reputation, and they both choose to praise him for the power of his ridicule rather than blame him for his misuse of it. But Kennett does not end there. After declaring that Aristophanes was more persuasive than Socrates, he then turns from the "fair Parts of his Character" to address the problematic ones. Repeating a familiar history, he says that Anytus and other enemies of Socrates knew that they had to weaken the philosopher's standing with the public in order to attack him: "In order to do this, they hir'd *Aristophanes*, with the consideration of a good round Sum, to expose the Philosopher on the Stage. They instructed him too which way to direct the Satyr."¹⁹ Kennett is frank about the playwright's guilt: "*Aristophanes*, who had no more Honesty than his Poverty would allow, easily swallow'd the Bribe." But the real problem, he suggests, is with the Athenians,

who expected nothing less than to see such a Great Man ridiculously personated in the Theatre, at first were in a general Wonder and Surprise. But being naturally envious, and apt to detract from those Persons,

¹⁷ Akenside (1744) 84.

¹⁸ Akenside (1744) 85.

¹⁹ Kennett (1735) 127.

whose Learning or Vertue had raised them above the common Level, they were afterwards tickled with the pleasant Satyr; and gave the Prize to *Aristophanes* with universal Applause.²⁰

This is not the most defensible defense of Aristophanes, but it reinforced the power of theatrical ridicule and shifted the blame for its negative effects away from the playwright and onto the satiric target and the foibles of the audience.

A few decades earlier, Joseph Addison addressed the same issue, but in a different way. In *Spectator* 23 (27 March 1711), he expresses his disapprobation of those who exercise satire without tempering it with good nature. He laments anonymous satirical attacks (“these Arrows that fly in the dark”) as well as those for which the authorship is well-known.²¹ Discussing the latter, he offers a number of historical examples of wise men who have responded to illiberal satirical attacks with admirable magnanimity. Chief among his examples is Socrates, who was “so little moved” at Aristophanes’ characterization of him in *Clouds* “that he was several times present at its being acted upon the Stage, and never expressed the least Resentment of it.”²² In this instance, Addison is not defending Aristophanes, but his relation of the reception of *Clouds* suggests that this instance of theatrical ridicule was not as disastrous as some had suggested.

Although Addison does not address the issue of Aristophanes having been bribed to attack Socrates, that charge was central to the characterizations of Aristophanes throughout the long eighteenth century. Attacking someone in an illiberal manner was bad enough, but doing so in return for a bribe was all the worse. Kevin J. Berland demonstrates how persistent this criticism of Aristophanes was throughout the eighteenth century, despite the fact that in the late seventeenth century, scholarship had cast serious doubt on both the charge that Aristophanes was bribed to attack Socrates and on the effects of that satiric “attack.” The tradition of invoking Aristophanes and his bribe was a staple of anti-theatrical argumentation from Gosson to Prynne to Collier despite the fact that there is no historical evidence that Socrates, Plato, or Xenophon exhibited any hostility toward Aristophanes. Addison attributes this to Socrates’ wisdom, but Berland suggests that the absence of hostility is evidence that there was no perceived provocation. He points out that in 1668, Jacques Paulmier Grentmesnil “compared the known dates of the first

20 Kensett (1735) 128.

21 Bond (1965) 1.97.

22 Bond (1965) 1.98.

production of the *Clouds* and the known dates [of the] trial of Socrates, together with the age of his accusers, and concluded that Anytus and Melitus simply could not have bribed Aristophanes.²³ Nevertheless, the narrative of bribery and the corruption of the stage was so appealing to many polemicists that it persisted in spite of Grentmesnil's research.

Had Fielding and Young produced their defense of Aristophanes, they likely would have presented something very similar to what Kennett and Akenside offered up because they were all writing in the same decade, when Walpole's power was at its height and when the political Opposition (with which Fielding, Young, and Akenside were sympathetic) was most in need of a precedent from classical antiquity to justify their political satire. The preface to *Plutus* praises the simplicity and force of Aristophanes' style and contrasts it with the insipid, pert dialogue of modern "genteel comedy" that passes for wit. They offer two examples of this feeble, modern wit from *The Provok'd Husband* (a 1728 play authored by Sir John Vanbrugh and Colley Cibber) as examples of how far comic wit has fallen from the days of Shakespeare, Fletcher, and Jonson. This was not merely an aesthetic contrast—it was laden with political connotations as well. Cibber was a favorite target of Fielding's. A comic actor, theater manager, and playwright, Cibber was named Poet Laureate during the period of Walpole's rule, a reward for Cibber's political loyalty and a move that shocked the literary world. (Alexander Pope made Cibber the King of the Dunces in his mock-epic poem, *The Dunciad*.) Cibber's comic drama tended toward the sentimental, representing a reaction against the harsher satiric comedy of the late seventeenth century. For all these reasons, Cibber was anathema to Fielding, so the dedication recommends that the uninitiated read a play by Jonson as a way to prepare their palate for the comic style of Aristophanes, noting that coming to this play from a Cibberian genteel comedy is like drinking wine after having eaten sugar plums—readers will be too cloyed to taste the quality of Aristophanes' works.²⁴ From Cibber's perspective, this was a compliment. In his autobiographical *Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian*, Cibber does not think Aristophanes' antiquity is enough to justify a modern satirist's use of personal ridicule:

I cannot find, therefore, from what reason, satyr is allow'd more license than comedy, or why either of them (to be admir'd) ought not to be limited by decency and justice. Let Juvenal and Aristophanes have taken

23 Berland (2007) 242.

24 Fielding and Young (1742) xi–xii.

what Liberties they please, if the learned have nothing more than their antiquity to justify their laying about them, at that enormous rate, I shall wish they had better excuse for them.²⁵

This was Arthur Murphy's opinion, and it was probably the prevailing attitude. But from the perspectives of 1737 and 1742, Fielding begged to differ. For him, Aristophanes was an exemplar in both political and aesthetic terms. But Fielding's opinion of Aristophanes was not consistent.

Aristophanes as Negative Example

If we look over the course of Fielding's career, we see that his attitudes toward Aristophanes range along a wide spectrum. The earliest reference that he makes to Aristophanes comes in the dedication to the Earl of Chesterfield that is prefixed to the 1733 comedy, *Don Quixote in England*. In it Fielding offers an ambiguous assessment of Aristophanes:

Socrates, who owed his Destruction greatly to the Contempt brought on him by the Comedies of *Aristophanes*, is a lasting Instance of the Force of Theatrical Ridicule: Here, indeed, this Weapon was used to an ill Purpose; but surely, what is able to bring Wisdom and Virtue into Disrepute, will, with great Facility, lay their Opposites under a general Contempt.²⁶

This comes in the context of praising Chesterfield as a defender of the freedom of the press and the stage (well before Chesterfield delivered his famous speech against the Licensing Act in the House of Lords) and celebrating him as a friend to British artists and patriots at a time when both have suffered under the rule of Walpole. But note how equivocal the praise of Aristophanes is: Fielding confesses his guilt in attacking Socrates, but suggests, as Akenside later would, that what we learn from that is a respect for the power of ridicule when it is applied to more deserving targets. There are off-hand, positive references to Aristophanes in *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*, but no substantive commentary. His name simply appears in a list of esteemed comic and classical authors.

But later in his career, Fielding developed a much different opinion of Aristophanes. In his *Covent-Garden Journal* of 4 February 1752, he condemns the

²⁵ Fone (1968) 26.

²⁶ Fielding (1733) A3r-v.

works of Aristophanes to the common hangman and says that Aristophanes' goal "appears to me very plainly to have been to ridicule all Sobriety, Modesty, Decency, Virtue and Religion out of the World."²⁷ And in *A Journey from this World to the Next*, Fielding takes some subtle swipes at Aristophanes. The character of Julian the Apostate describes being taken in as a servant by St. Chrysostom, who was always a good master, except on the occasion when the character neglected to set the comedies of Aristophanes on his pillow (the saint, like Plato, was reputed to have slept with Aristophanes' works under his pillow). Julian notes:

He was, indeed, extremely fond of that *Greek* Poet, and frequently made me read his Comedies to him: when I came to any of the loose Passages, he would smile, and say, *It was pity his Matter was not as pure as his Style*; of which latter, he was so immoderately fond, that notwithstanding the Detestation he expressed for Obscenity, he hath made me repeat those Passages ten times over.²⁸

The hypocrisy of St. Chrysostom indulging in the guilty pleasure of reading Aristophanes is the primary target of Fielding's satire, but it is predicated on the reader sharing Fielding's negative judgment of Aristophanes. What we see, then, when we survey Fielding's whole career is that his praise for Aristophanes is strongest during the period of his most acute political disaffection (1736–42), but as we move away from that era—both before and after—we see more qualified praise and outright condemnation. This is especially true of Fielding near the end of his life. On balance, Fielding himself would have understood Murphy's ascription of the title "modern Aristophanes" as criticism of his youthful excesses—and he likely would have shared that opinion.

There may have been many factors that contributed to Fielding's strong rejection of Aristophanes later in life: the wisdom that comes with age, the move away from Opposition politics, or the move from drama to prose fiction and journalism. But Knight's essay, "Fielding and Aristophanes," suggests an equally compelling reason: the emergence of Samuel Foote. Relegated to a footnote, Knight's observation is worth pausing over:

Fielding's change of attitude toward Aristophanes seems in part a result of his repeated battles with Samuel Foote, another claimant to the title of Aristophanes' successor, whom Fielding attacks in *Jacobite's Journal*,

²⁷ Fielding (1988) 74.

²⁸ Fielding (1993) 2.49.

number 22, in terms resembling the attacks on his own plays in 1737: “but surely since the Days of Old Comedy, none, ’till your Time, have had the Audacity to bring real Facts and Persons upon the Stage.”²⁹

Knight leaves this quickly behind because he is most interested in establishing Fielding as a genuine and lifelong devotee of Aristophanes, an argument he pursues by asserting a series of common themes and techniques that I find unconvincing because they are so general that we can see them as broadly shared among all comic writers in the Western tradition. They are not exclusive to Fielding and Aristophanes. And Nancy Mace has shown that Aristophanes was a classical author whom Fielding seldom alluded to in his works.³⁰ But Knight’s observation helpfully shifts our attention to Foote and to the conception of Aristophanes as a negative example, which was the prevailing opinion in the period—especially in the second half of the eighteenth century.

The sheer hypocrisy of Fielding’s condemnation of Foote seems breathtaking, but the length and vehemence of Fielding’s harangue are what deserve our consideration. The attack on Foote was occasioned by his performance of a satiric revue at the Little Haymarket in the spring of 1748, called *An Auction of Pictures*. As Battestin has detailed, Fielding was operating a puppet show in Pantion Street at this same time, and he and Foote took turns ridiculing each other in their respective venues. On 21 April 1748, for instance, Fielding advertised his puppet show as featuring “the Comical Execution of *Mr. PUPPET FUT, Esq.*”³¹ A week later, Fielding has Foote appear before the “Court of Criticism” in *The Jacobite’s Journal*, and subjects him to a sustained attack in the form of an imaginary trial. Fielding, as judge, accuses Foote of impersonating “one Justice of the Peace, one Orator, one Poet, one Lord, one Auctioneer, and divers other Persons” at his “*Scandal-Shop, in the Haymarket.*”³² Given that, a decade earlier, Fielding was the target of identical charges, this seems very hypocritical. But a closer look at the indictment and process shows some key differences between Fielding’s Aristophanic satire and Foote’s.

Foote remains silent throughout most of the fictional trial. He pleads “Not Guilty” but offers no defense; rather, he compounds his crime by imitating Fielding. Foote “began to mimick the Court, pulling a Chew of Tobacco from his Mouth, in Imitation of his Honour, who is greatly fond of that Weed.”³³ His crime is also compounded by the fact that his performances are attended

29 Knight (1981) 482.

30 Mace (1996).

31 Fielding (1975) 261 n. 2.

32 Fielding (1975) 262.

33 Fielding (1975) 263.

by men and women of quality (who should know better than to sanction such stuff); because his show was performed in defiance of the Stage Licensing Act; because he impersonates not just the living, but also the dead (who cannot defend their reputations); and because the government (for whatever reasons) has not acted to punish Foote as it should have done under the Licensing Act. Unstated, but clearly operative here, is yet another objection: Foote is doing this merely to entertain his audiences without any higher moral or political purpose that might justify his personal ridicule. Aristophanic satire is utterly rejected in this process, but Foote is even worse than Aristophanes: "Nay, you have gone even beyond that Old Comedy, which was by Law banished from *Athens*, as an intolerable Evil; since the Representation by Mimickry is much stronger than that by Painting on a Mask."³⁴ The trial ends with Foote's punishment:

I shall proceed therefore to pronounce the Judgment of the Court; which is, that you *Samuel Fut* be p-ssed upon, with Scorn and Contempt, as a low Buffoon; and I do, with the utmost Scorn and Contempt, p-ss upon you accordingly.

The Prisoner was then removed from the Bar, mimicking and pulling a Chew of Tobacco from his Mouth, while the P-ss ran plentifully down his Face.³⁵

We should note that this spectacular attack on Foote occurs at the outset of his theatrical career. He would go on to establish himself as a much more respectable author and performer than he was in 1748, but mimicry was always fundamental to his stagecraft, and the association with Aristophanes was a constant throughout his career. Just as Fielding was moving away from his Aristophanic affinities, Foote was embracing his own, very different version of being the "English Aristophanes." But what did that title mean in the post-Walpole era?

Foote and/as Aristophanes

In *Disciplining Satire*, I suggested that Foote embraced the association with Aristophanes and made much ado of his supposedly transgressive satire. Similarly, Edith Hall notes that, "Despite the lip-service Foote paid to Aristophanes' contribution to 'Greek Virtue', he saw no further than those

³⁴ Fielding (1975) 264.

³⁵ Fielding (1975) 266.

passages in the ancient plays which adumbrated his own brand of personal (not political) satire.”³⁶ The success Foote enjoyed over his nearly three decades on the London stage, and especially during his ten years as a royal patentee (1766–76) attests to the effectiveness of his marketing strategy: he passed himself off as the “English Aristophanes” without running seriously afoul of the government. Quite the opposite: he did it with official sanction and support. We might wonder in what sense, then, was he Aristophanic? The answer lies in the alternate attitudes toward Aristophanes that prevailed throughout the period but that were especially strong in the latter half of the century. This is not surprising since denunciations of ad hominem satire became commonplace in the second half of the eighteenth century, even as the practice flourished.³⁷ Not everyone regarded Aristophanes as an exemplar of political dissent; indeed, there is a good deal of evidence to suggest that this was a minority opinion largely confined to the highly partisan Walpole era. Outside of that context, “Aristophanes” meant something very different to promoters and detractors alike.

On each side of the Walpole era, we see a tradition of strong denunciation of Aristophanes as a malicious wit and mercenary hack writer. In 1701, Richard Claridge notes that Aristophanes was a poor man willing to prostitute his pen. He attacked Socrates at the instigation of the priests of Athens and soon turned the vulgar against the philosopher. Claridge’s pamphlet is about religious dissenters, not drama, so he compares Aristophanes to a Mr. Keith, who ridicules the Quakers.³⁸ That same year, the anonymous author of *The Works of Plato Abridg’d* calls Aristophanes “the most serviceable instrument” with which the Athenians could attack Socrates under the spurious charge of having introduced new gods.³⁹ Ten years later, the Earl of Shaftesbury offers up the standard description of Aristophanes as an Old Comedy writer, but rather than being laudatory, he says that Aristophanes and writers like him were petulant and debauched and observed no limits to their malice.⁴⁰ The list goes on, but this gives a sense of the terms of censure of Aristophanes: he was lewd and impious, and far from being a brave satirist who speaks to truth to power, he was the ready mouthpiece for the powerful.

This negative view of Aristophanes gets its fullest airing in the post-Walpole era with the publication in 1759 of *The Greek Theatre of Father Brumoy*.

36 Hall (2007a) 74.

37 Lockwood (1979).

38 Claridge (1701).

39 Anon. (1701) Aa2r.

40 Shaftesbury (1710) 91.

Translated by Mrs. Charlotte Lennox. The third volume contains "A Dissertation upon the Greek Comedy" that condemns Aristophanes as licentious and insipid (because the topical satire has lost its force by being so outdated). He decries the "loose expressions thrown out to the populace to raise laughter from corrupt passions, which are unworthy the curiosity of decent readers, and which ought to rest eternally in proper obscurity."⁴¹ In addition to being vulgar, Aristophanes was also a tool of the state. Brumoy says that he "made a great figure during the whole Peloponnesian war, not merely as a comic poet by whom the people were diverted, but as the censor of the government, as a man kept in pay by the state to reform it, and almost to act the part of the arbitrator of the public."⁴² Brumoy then goes on to quote Rene Rapin's judgment of Aristophanes, who condemns him for taking too great a pleasure in ridiculing the leading figures of his day and ends with this memorable observation: "To conclude, Plutarch, in his comparison of these authors, says, that the muse of Aristophanes is an abandoned prostitute, and that of Menander a modest woman."⁴³

Brumoy calls the ridicule of Socrates in *Clouds* "certainly criminal" and does not distance himself from Plutarch's judgment that by employing personal satire, Aristophanes turned "art into malignity, simplicity into brutality, merriment into farce, and amour into impudence."⁴⁴ He then ends with an extended discussion of the comic genre and temporal change. Aristophanes, he says, should be judged negatively for his personal satire and for the strong element of farce that runs throughout his works, but he then tempers this by noting that comedy, more than any other art form, appeals to the tastes of its time and inexorably loses its appeal in later ages. His survey concludes with an even-handed assessment that acknowledges that the likes of Plato, Cicero, and St. Chrysostom valued Aristophanes for the "manly and vigorous Atticism of this sarcastic comedian," but that he still has "essential faults" that cannot be overlooked.⁴⁵

In an essay entitled, "Aristophanes, Plautus, Terence, and the Refinement of English Comedy," Eugene M. Waith offers an excellent account of how seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English commentators developed a history of classical drama to suit their own arguments regarding the refinement of the English stage. He notes that one of the "most interesting kinds of evidence

⁴¹ Brumoy (1759) 3.124.

⁴² Brumoy (1759) 3.132.

⁴³ Brumoy (1759) 3.133.

⁴⁴ Brumoy (1759) 3.142.

⁴⁵ Brumoy (1759) 3.161.

of the relation between the refinement of comedy and the standard attitudes toward classical dramatists is found in comments made by the translators of Aristophanes.⁴⁶ This is because Aristophanes is universally regarded as the exemplar of the Old Comedy that gradually developed into the New Comedy, exemplified by Terence. Waith notes that the common history of the classical theater relied upon a biological metaphor of growth and maturity in which the childish excesses of Aristophanes (ad hominem satire, ribald content) are disciplined, resulting in the refined and polite humor of Terence.⁴⁷ With few exceptions, Terence was regarded as superior to Aristophanes, whose excesses offended elite Athenians and called for the intervention of the state.

Waith calls this line of argument seriously misleading, pointing out that there is evidence to suggest that elites were not offended by Aristophanes and that the change in comedy from old to new was hardly the result of state intervention. Nevertheless, the standard account remained remarkably durable throughout the long eighteenth century. One reason for its durability is that this version of events provided a classical analogue to the contemporary stage, bolstering the case put forward by anti-theatrical polemicists. As Kevin Berland points out, anti-theatrical polemicists from Stephen Gosson to William Prynne to Jeremy Collier used the example of Aristophanes to support their arguments against the stage.⁴⁸ Indeed, the arguments marshaled by the Walpole government in favor of passing the Stage Licensing Act rely upon this historical tradition, casting Fielding as a modern-day Aristophanes whose licentious practice calls out for the helpful intervention of the state, an intervention that will not only silence an obnoxious playwright, but will also promote a new era of theatrical excellence.

In making this case, the government writers were calling as much on the tradition of philo-theatrical proposals to improve the stage as they were on the anti-theatrical tradition. Addison is representative of many other eighteenth-century commentators in regarding the classical theater as an edifying and improving institution—and one that provided a strong contrast to the contemporary English stage. In *Spectator* 446 (1 August 1712), he expresses the conventional view this way:

If the *English* Stage were under the same Regulations the *Athenian* was formerly, it would have the same Effect that had, in recommending the Religion, the Government, and Publick Worship of its Country. Were our

46 Waith (1988) 98.

47 Waith (1988) 92.

48 Berland (2007) 234–5.

Plays subject to proper Inspections and Limitations, we might not only pass away several of our vacant Hours in the highest Entertainments; but should always rise from them wiser and better than we sat down to them.⁴⁹

This is exactly the criticism that Walpole's writers leveled against Fielding in the pages of *The Gazetteer* in the spring and summer of 1737, during the run-up to the passage of the Stage Licensing Act. It also sounds like Murphy's judgment on Fielding's theatrical legacy, and it shares more than a passing resemblance to many assessments of Foote's career.

Foote was associated with Aristophanes early in his career, and he cultivated the association with great care. His admirers and detractors did the same, and they were able to do so because of the dual nature of Aristophanes' reputation. One of Foote's strongest antagonists was the Reverend Martin Madan, who was highly offended by Foote's demeaning imitation of the Methodist evangelist, George Whitefield, in his 1759 play, *The Minor*. This impersonation instigated both government action (the offensive impersonation was banned from performances) and a pamphlet war over the regulation of the stage.⁵⁰ In a passage that offers a sense of the way that Madan accepts the association between Foote and Aristophanes, but uses it to his own purposes, he writes:

As for Mr. Foote and Aristophanes, there is a very great resemblance between them. Both being buffoons, and libellers [sic], instead of satyrists; and their pieces alike temporary, local and personal, which leaves them destitute of any merit, (supposing them to have any at all) exclusive from what they derive from an instant of time and a peculiar spot of ground.⁵¹

In a very clever reversal, Foote responded to Madan by suggesting that the credit for reviving Aristophanic performances properly belongs to George Whitefield. Whitefield has been called an "actor-preacher" by a recent biographer, and his sermons often drew thousands of auditors. In them, he would impersonate characters in edifying stories that exemplified the point of his sermons.⁵² These impersonation, Foote says, constitute a revival of the Old Comedy, whereas Foote's own performances at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket are more aligned with the techniques of the Middle Comedy.

49 Bond (1965) 4.66.

50 Kinservik (1999).

51 Madan (1760) 26.

52 Stout (1991).

Foote was, of course, having fun at Whitefield's expense. This exchange aside, the association with Aristophanes was one that Foote proudly promoted throughout his career, exposing him to both praise and censure.

Foote's association with Aristophanes has long been accepted as a badge of honor, a testament to Foote's moral and political (if not exactly partisan) commitments. The two modern book-length treatments of Foote's career regard him as a brave voice of opposition to censorship, hypocrisy, and a host of other social ills.⁵³ This is understandable because the association between Foote and Aristophanes was so pervasive during the eighteenth century. But we ought to be very skeptical about this. A look at the 1792 play entitled *Reform: A Farce* helps to illustrate why.⁵⁴ On the title page, the text bills itself as being "modernized from Aristophanes" and written by "S. Foote, Jr." In fact, it was written by Francis Wrangham and was clearly never meant for theatrical performance. Modeled on *The Dunciad* and other satires that feature mock scholarly commentary, the text is heavily annotated and so is meant to be read, not performed. The text features Thomas Paine, by name, as a character and comments explicitly on controversial topics related to the debates about political reform at a time of strong anti-Jacobin reaction in England. Foote's name is invoked on the title page, but the text is far different from anything Foote ever produced. It offers direct ad hominem satire and takes on explicitly political issues at a moment of great political instability. There is no chance that the Lord Chamberlain would ever have granted such a text a license to be performed on the London stage. And for that reason alone, the text bears no relation to anything that Foote ever produced.

Foote's Aristophanic reputation was built on his technique of impersonating well-known individuals; it was not built on the strength of his moral or political convictions. The fact that Wrangham chose to promote his text by associating it with the names of Aristophanes and Foote is evidence of the success of Foote's skill as a marketer, not of his convictions as a satirist. If Foote's convictions had led him to model his plays on the example of Aristophanes, then we might reasonably expect to find the latter praised—or at least discussed—in Foote's early critical treatise, *The Roman and English Comedy Consider'd and Compar'd* (1747). But Aristophanes merits just one mention in this work, and that is just in passing.⁵⁵ Rather than focus on Old Comedy, Foote's discussion treats New Comedy and its modern imitators at great length.

53 Trefinan (1972) and Belden (1969).

54 Wrangham (1792). For a recent analysis of Wrangham's adaptation, see Tordoff (2014).

55 Foote (1747).

After Foote's death, commentary grew more skeptical of the easy association of his name with that of Aristophanes. When discussing Foote's dramatic career, his early biographer, William Cooke, suggests that the premiere of *Diversions of the Morning* in 1747, marked the revival of, "a species of writing . . . unknown since the *middle comedy* of the Grecian stage." Because Foote did not expose real people by name and did not exhibit the "loose jokes, personal abuse, and irregularities, of that wild, infant state of drama," Cooke says that Foote cannot be equated with Aristophanes and the Old Comedy.⁵⁶ Other nineteenth-century commentators have been more emphatic in distancing Foote from Aristophanes. John Forster writes that the "comparison of [Foote] with Aristophanes is absurd, because he had nothing of the imagination, or wealth of poetry, of the Greek."⁵⁷ Forster at least grants that Foote was an audacious satirist in the vein of Aristophanes. By contrast, John Timbs writes that, "Foote has been more commonly than appropriately called the English Aristophanes; seeing that such a designation pays much too high a compliment to Foote, and a very indifferent one to the great master of the older Grecian comedy." For Timbs, Foote had so little of the "burlesque ideality which constituted the essential character of Aristophanes, that his exercise of the *vis comica* reduced itself almost exclusively to a contemporary personal satire . . . amounting to little more than a refined species of mimicry."⁵⁸ This is a harsh judgment if we imagine that Foote's goal was to be a literary heir to Aristophanes, but there is little to suggest that such was his goal. Rather, Timbs seems closest to the mark when he concludes, "Hence, 'the English Aristophanes,' as applied to Foote is almost a *sobriquet*."⁵⁹

Conclusion

Fundamentally, this survey of attitudes towards Aristophanes and his eighteenth-century descendants shows us that, by and large, the assessment was a mixed one. Political partisans of Fielding and modern scholars who wish to see him as a daring Opposition writer stress his Aristophanic inclinations and overstate this element of his career. It was short-lived and ultimately rejected in strongly denunciatory terms. But because scholars find the theater of the 1730s to be an exciting time of generic experimentation and political

⁵⁶ Cooke (1805) 2.39.

⁵⁷ Forster (1858) 2:360.

⁵⁸ Timbs (1872) 1.241.

⁵⁹ Timbs (1872) 1.241.

daring, tragically cut off by the Licensing Act, there has been a widespread tendency to overvalue that period and undervalue what came before and after. There has been a consequent overvaluation of so-called “Aristophanic” satiric drama that has resulted in many scholars reading Fielding’s entire theatrical career in this way and in reading Foote’s career as one defined by opposition to state censorship, which is patently absurd. What is most interesting is that the modern critical assumption of what Aristophanes meant in the eighteenth century is, itself, narrow and unrepresentative. Yes, everyone called Foote the “English Aristophanes,” but not everyone meant that as a compliment. That has been our assumption, but it is an erroneous one. In *The Case of the Duchess of Kingston* (1775), the anonymous author twice refers to Foote as “our modern Aristophanes,” but in both instances that is done with a derisive sneer, not with approbation.⁶⁰ Similarly, the Reverend William Jackson’s scurrilous poem, *Sodom and Onan* (1776) refers to Foote simply as “Aristophanes,” and that reference, like the entire poem it comes in, was hardly complimentary.⁶¹ There are many other examples like these, and together they serve as a warning that in the eighteenth century, “Aristophanes” meant a lot more than Fielding and Foote, and that the association of his name with those two writers was anything but simple.

60 Anon. (1775) 13, 23.

61 Jackson (1776) 7.

Teknomajikality and the Humanimal in Aristophanes' *Wasps*

Mark Payne

"Ἀξων, κλεψύδρα, κληρωτήριον, πινάκιον:¹ the story of Athenian democracy could be written as a triumphal narrative of things that enable, or perhaps even produce, the forms of political sociality—devices that intervene in the organization of human bodies to prosthetize the arena of decision making. This story has in fact already been imagined and can easily be extracted from Aristophanes' *Wasps*, where it appears in typically sketchy, comic form. For on the way to the triumph of its comic hero, *Wasps* embeds a cautionary tale about democratic life as addiction to the form of life that the machinery of democracy produces, and the capacity of human beings to co-evolve with these prostheses. But this biopolitical fable of the humanimal's addiction to its self-externalizations is only one of the play's stories about the co-evolution of the humanimal and its prostheses. *Wasps* also contains a story about how the humanimal can empower itself creatively with these prostheses, in a mode of co-evolution that I am going to call teknomajikality, in homage to dub pioneer Lee Perry, whose distinctive understanding of the place of technology in the musical salvation of the human animal will be the subject of this paper's final section.²

I use the term "humanimal" to open the study of Aristophanes to the potential for renewed interrogation of the dramatic agents of Old Comedy that is afforded by the burgeoning field of animal studies in the humanities at large.³

¹ *Axon* ("revolving law display"), *klepsydra* ("water clock"), *kleroterion* ("balloting room"), *pinakion* ("voting ticket").

² *Teknomajikal* is the name of Perry's 1997 album "with" billionaire Swiss techno pioneer Dieter Meier (on the difficult production history, see Katz [2006] 450–1), but I will use teknomajikality more generally here for the relationship between technology, infancy, and the claim of the future that is enacted in Perry's musical career as a whole.

³ The field is now so large that contestation of its various genealogies has become an emergent area of interest in itself; see, for example, Fraiman (2012). That said, a good sense of the possibilities of the field at large can be gleaned from the animal studies section of the *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association* 124, and, its companion overview paper by Wolfe (2009). A more succinct introduction to the field is Howard (2009).

Whereas specialized studies of the animals in Old Comedy have not been infrequent,⁴ the question of how the presence of animals as dramatic agents inflects the question of humanity in the plays of Old Comedy has not been broached as a general question in light of the last decade or so of work in animal studies at large.⁵ This is especially regrettable given that the relationship between human beings and other animals, even within a single play, is not simply a border to be decided and policed, but is rather a moving target, in which nonhuman animals may figure aspiration for a more satisfying form of human life (bird song in *Birds*, for example), offer raw material for prosthetic enhancement of the human organism in its pursuit of superior competitive functioning (bird wings in *Birds*, for example), and provide cooked material for direct human consumption on stage (bird meat in *Birds*, for example).⁶

It is the relationship between human being, nonhuman animal, and prosthesis that I want to draw out here in thinking about the way in which the human being is staged losing ground to the animal in *Wasps*. For the play suggests that the vitality of a prior form of Athenian manhood, instantiated in Philocleon and his juror associates, was dependent on its untrammelled channeling of particular forms of animality, but that in a tamed, domesticated, and emasculated Athens, these forms of animality are a threat to the ordinary forms of sociality instantiated in his son, Bdelycleon. One project of the play is therefore to ask how to introject this animal past into the present—how to produce a new kind of humanimal in the face of the loathing that the animality of an earlier generation inspires. The problems of generational succession, and the inheritance of the past as a biological transmission, are linked to the problem of the animal as the possibility of cultural rejuvenation. For Athens to succeed as it has in the past, it must somehow be able to hand on its animality as the possibility of renewal, but this possibility for renewal is itself conditional upon a proper understanding of the regenerative possibilities of the teknomajikal prosthesis, and its power to advance the humanimal's cultural self-realization. Becoming animal again means becoming teknomajikal.

Robert Harrison has recently elucidated the nature of the relationship between the technological prosthesis and the prolongation of youth that our own time is living out in the structure of its forms of sociality. What Harrison calls “juvenescence” involves a loss of the ability to so much as adumbrate the

4 See, for example, Daitz (1997) and Dunbar (1997).

5 Rothwell (2007) and Corbel-Morana (2012) do not engage with this work.

6 See my discussion of the play in Payne (2010) 84–99. Classical studies have been slow to respond to the challenge of animal studies; see, however, Williams (2013) on the valuable provocations it offers.

aged as a source of value in a society in which the unilateral positing of youth as a value means that agedness has the character of a contagion to be continually shucked off. Under these conditions, the technological prosthesis perpetuates juvenescence by normalizing absence as a modality of connectivity, and by hypostasizing the biotic dependence of human intelligence on the exceptionally prolonged childhood of human beings as the form of life that Harrison calls, after Sophocles' "Ode to Man" (*Antigone* 332–75), "incautious neophilia."⁷

The playful intelligence that our prolonged childhood enables becomes the form of relationality we call addiction by becoming fixated on its own externalizations in the apparatus of culture that give it back to itself as the mirror of its self-realization. To return to itself as a genuinely rejuvenating playful intelligence it needs to be interrupted in its attachments such that it can reboot the process of cathexis. It is this process that I wish to follow out in *Wasps*, and it is in this regard that Perry insists that his embrace of technological intervention in the making of music should be understood as enabling an escape from addiction. For what Perry claims is that this technological intervention restores the potentialities of playful infant intelligence as a potential for cathexis that first comes on line prior to biopolitical formation. The aesthetic prosthesis reboots the organism and allows it to begin again.⁸

In *Wasps*, then, we see the thematization and the enactment of the need to begin again the organismic ground of cultural identity, and we can recognize in this enactment the emic form of the will to begin again that is the very rubric under which Greek literature has so often been operationalized as an agent of trans-historical, teknomajikal, rejuvenation. Since (at least) Schiller's "On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry," Greek literature has been the teknomajikal baby of world literature, its preternatural infancy invoked to rejuvenate a senescent European modernity. Comparing Aristophanes with Perry thus sets comparison against reception, insofar as reception as a mode of literary study accepts history as the rubric under which it operates, and thereby occludes the majikal thinking that called for classical literature in the first place: the invocation of a still living past to reinvigorate the present by repossessing it and reanimating it. Comparison, by contrast, acknowledges the magical operator, the trans-historical call to come forth and quicken what is dead to itself.

7 Harrison (2014) 14–5: "The neophilia that drives man to explore, discover, challenge, subdue, and overreach himself in unprecedented acts of defiance."

8 One might compare the relationship between automatism and beginning again in the late work of Samuel Beckett, where the endless project of rebeginning is what produces the fault line between ethos as habit as ethics as such.

Mouseman and Crowmachine

“Father has escaped into the kitchen: he’s all bent over (καταδεδυκώς) and scurrying around like a mouse (μυσπολεῖ τι). Make sure he doesn’t get out through the drain hole for the sink” (139–40).⁹ It is in this fashion that we make our acquaintance with Philocleon, the old man hero of *Wasps*. Bdelucleon, his son, appears from his bedroom, and informs the servants of the house that his father has escaped from his confinement and is now running around the walls like a panicked rodent. Aristophanes’ verbal invention (μυσπολεῖ) exactly captures the behavior of a mouse surprised by human beings, even as it points to the impossibility of what it describes: Philocleon, an ordinary adult size human being, has somehow contracted himself sufficiently (καταδεδυκώς) that he can execute such mouse motion.

For most of us, our first acquaintance with the pursuit of family vermin will have been Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis*. Gregor Samsa climbs the walls of his former bedroom in a way that is only possible for the insect he has become, and makes occasional forays into the hallway of the family apartment from where he is chased back into his own room with a broom.¹⁰ *The Metamorphosis* is a story of filial shame, and its staging of humiliation in the figure of the humanimal is easy to inhabit; it is, rather, the transformative rejuvenation of the elder Samsa from old, inert, and ineffective, into an approximation of his youthful self that is somehow enabled by Gregor’s shame, which is difficult to access.¹¹ Aristophanes, for his part, circumscribes the territory of affective involvement by beginning the play with the slaves. The relationship of Sosias and Xanthias to Philocleon the humanimal is enacted in the modality of trouble, not the modality of care. After they thought they had sealed every man-sized nook and cranny in the house, Philocleon “like a jackdaw” hammered pegs into the inside of the courtyard wall, climbed up them, and hopped away, resulting in the present domestic arrangements in which a giant net has been draped over the courtyard of the house (129–32).

Here, too, the animal behavior is plausible enough: tame jackdaws will climb little ladders if encouraged to do so. But the placement of the comparison once again ensures maximum cognitive dissonance: “Like a jackdaw he hammered

9 All translations are my own. MacDowell is very helpful on the layout of the kitchen and its connection to the rest of the house (MacDowell (1971) 150).

10 Leadbeater (1986) considers the influence of the dung beetle in Aristophanes’ *Peace* on the conception of Kafka’s story.

11 My thanks to Philip Walsh for reminding me that Gregor’s transformation is paralleled by his father’s.

steps into the wall for himself, then hopped away” (ὁ δ’ ὥσπερ εἰ κολοιοῖς αὐτῷ παττάλους | ἐνέκρουεν εἰς τὸν τοῖχον, εἴτ’ ἐξήλλετο—129–30). It is in the fitting up of steps for himself, not in his hopping away, that Philocleon is like a jackdaw. The staging of the humanimal is not with an eye to appetite or lack of self-control, but to a capacity for mechanical salvation in which the animal is imagined to be continuous with the human. Technically inclined birds build Peisetairus’ city in the clouds in *Birds* (1133–57), in keeping with the Athenian’s understanding of their wings as a transferable prosthesis that he can appropriate in order to pursue human business more expeditiously, and the humanimal prostheses multiply quickly in the case of Philocleon, sometimes one on top of the other. He clings to a pillar in the law courts “like a limpet,” and comes home with his nails covered with the wax from his voting tablet, looking like a honey bee or a bumble bee (105–8).

The animal comparisons come thick and fast, and none of them are instantiations of zoological precision or symbolic clarity.¹² Rather than identifying something essential about Philocleon by identifying it with the ruling quality of a particular kind of animal, animality points to a malleability in Philocleon, which he himself claims to be able to operationalize in his Q&A with his son (144):

Bd: You there, who are you? *Ph:* I am smoke that escapes.

Even as a set-up for the joke that follows (“smoke of what wood?”), it is a great first line. It is brilliantly surprising (and pleasingly slapstick, if Philocleon sticks his head out of the chimney to deliver it), and capitalizes to good effect on the uncanniness we have been prepared to encounter in Philocleon.¹³ If melancholy archaic interrogations of human ontology are the background to the question, “smoke that escapes” is an excellent answer.¹⁴ Insubstantiality is made into a power: “you” is what eludes capture, both physically, as we would

12 Whitman notes ass, monster, bee, jackdaw, mouse, sparrow, weasel, octopus, and dog (Whitman (1964) 163). To this we might add the disclaimer of comparison in Philocleon’s comically exasperated expression of frustration at his inability to escape from the house: “There isn’t enough of a crack for a gnat to get out, so you’d better think of something else: I can’t turn myself into cheese” (*Wasps* 352–3).

13 Cf. MacDowell (1971) 150–1.

14 Pindar’s “what are mortals: man is the shadow of a dream” (*Pythian* 8.95–6), most obviously, and the echo of its thinking in the zoological interrogation of human nothingness in the parabasis of Aristophanes’ *Birds* (685–7): “Dwellers in the dark, feeble mortals, shadowy, fleeting tribes, wretched dream shapes...” Smoke and shadow are cherished figures of human nullity.

expect from the comic hero, who makes his first, very corporeal appearance with this saying, and cognitively, lack of definition being a defining characteristic of the comic hero in this particular play.

Philocleon is not to be identified with any one of his animal guises, just as the chorus of “wasps” is not really an animal chorus in the way that the chorus of *Birds* is really composed of birds. The chorus may have huge stingers and act as a swarm (420–7), they may even exhibit the behavior of a hive when provoked (223–27), or conduct their legal business confined in tight spaces like larvae in their cells (1111), but when called upon to act in defense of Philocleon, they manifest the same zoological malleability as the old man himself. They get up on the roof and shit on those below them, which provokes a comparison with mice from Bdelycleon that is immediately shot down by Xanthias, who invents a new species name to describe them (ἡλιαστῆς ὀροφίας—“roof juror”), only for Bdelycleon to observe that the juror in question is turning into a sparrow, and about to fly away (203–8).¹⁵

The Democratic Body

“*Who are you?*” Bdelycleon’s question to his father must be asked of the jurors as a whole. What the play proposes is a symptomatic answer, organized around the question of the democratic body: what is it that living in the Athenian democracy does to its citizens, such that citizenship presents as either addiction to, or rejection of, the democratic substance?¹⁶ Philocleon and Bdelycleon are two pathologies of this substance, one the face of rapid metabolization, the other the face of rejection. Both exhibit interesting case histories.

When slaves dream, their dreams are incredible, so fantastic and vivid that they could simply migrate to a Surrealist canvas (I will return to these dreams later).¹⁷ But the first symptom of P-Cleon’s pathology is the preemption of dreaming by nocturnal cerebration in which his mind returns to objects of the

15 As MacDowell observes, “the expression is meant to sound like a kind of animal; there was a kind of snake called ὀροφίας” (MacDowell (1971) 159).

16 Xanthias and Sosias pioneer the symptomatic approach (70–90). As non-citizens, they do not relate to the democracy in the modality of addiction.

17 In this they are of a piece with the Aristophanic imaginary as a whole, which Whitman compares to Dalí on the basis of the identity of function between the comic imagination and the unconscious mind’s transforming power. Both do work with the real, whereas B-Cleon is merely haunted by it, such that his rejection must be read as a symptom of the democratic substance, like his father’s rapid metabolization, not as evidence of his possession of the real, in contradistinction to his father (Whitman (1964) 265–77).

day that lack the fantastic accompaniments and substitutions that are present in the dreams of slaves. During the brief moments when he falls asleep at night, "his mind flutters around the water clock" (93). It cannot dream because it is pre-occupied by the juridical machinery that is P-Cleon's diurnal obsession.

When P-Cleon gets out of bed, his hands remain locked in their grip on the voting pebble (94–95). Automatization and mechanization of the body is followed by erotic compulsion: when P-Cleon sees "x is hot" graffiti, he counters it compulsively with "ballot box is hot" (his response takes the form of a counter-vote, rather than erasure and overwriting). Likewise, when B-Cleon proposes that the solution to the dissolution of family life created by P-Cleon's addiction is for everyone to have his own little law court at home (803), P-Cleon is obsessive about reproducing in miniature the proper apparatus of juridical life: there can be no justice without jury railings (830).¹⁸

On this account, democracy, like the tragedy of Euripides, is a phantasm projected by its props, an instance of the "technical maieutics" by which "the human and the tool invent each other."¹⁹ P-Cleon would rather eat lawsuits than skate and eels, and he understands the form of life (βίος, 509) that B-Cleon would deprive him of as a commitment to a higher form of pleasure than the consumption of the delicacies that elsewhere in Aristophanes are the aspirational register of natural man.²⁰ The allure of the technical produces a second appetite that leaves the phantom of natural man in its wake. The reason that technicized democracy is so appealing, however, is that it affords unprecedented opportunities for the satisfaction of an appetite more fundamental even than hunger to the well-being of the human organism: aggression.

What P-Cleon enjoys about jury service is that as a juror he can make big men beg for mercy, force his victims to put on shows for his amusement by telling stories and seconding their children to weep for their acquittal, make famous actors perform star turns in private, and have his family fawn on him for the cash payments he receives (560–630). Juridical satisfaction is a mixture of narcissistic self-aggrandizement afforded by the possession of punitive power, and the deployment of this punitive power for the settling of scores.

18 Cf. 386, where his dying wish is to be buried beneath these railings, and 755, where his longing to stand beside the voting urns is full blown *Sehnsucht*, comparable to Bellerophon's yearning for the azure.

19 Stiegler (1998) 175. Hansen nicely communicates the fascination that the technical apparatus of the Athenian democracy is capable of exerting as a power of self-reproduction—its memetics, as we might call it (Hansen (1991) 202–3).

20 See the discussion of *Peace* 530–9 and *Clouds* 50–2 below, and compare *Acharnians* 886 on the Copaic eel as the deepest desire of the comic chorus.

Juridical satisfaction is precisely the area of continuity with the satisfactions of iambic poetry—a democratization of its power to harm—and thus the undecidable threshold between physiological pleasure and its supplementation with second order, non-physiological satisfactions, by means of which the human being projects itself out of the animal order. It is where ideology takes hold: the site of interpellation from the democratic order and the place of its rapid proliferation once it has melded with the organismic constitution of the human subject.

Or at least this is what B-Cleon attempts to convince P-Cleon of. Rather than a position of self-determination that affords unprecedented opportunities for the satisfaction of a natural desire for aggressive domination, B-Cleon argues that the juror is a domesticated attack dog. His trainer sics him on his enemies as he sees fit (704–5), and the juror gets the offal of empire to gnaw on as a reward for good behavior (672).²¹ This is the enlightened approach to iambic aggression. Pindar, in *Pythian* 2, counters Archilochus' claims to feral aggressivity by portraying him as a domesticated animal, fattened up for public inspection. The domesticated animal does not understand that the form of life it thinks is proper to itself has in fact been imposed upon it from the outside. Its very body is evidence of its instrumentalization.²²

B-Cleon's insight is melancholic. He is sufficiently alienated from his culture to see its ideological functioning, but he is trapped by that very insight in a melancholic loss of imagination. He recognizes ideological interpellation and the instrumentalization of natural drives for political ends, but that is all he sees. He is a witness to the material fact of the humanimal's cooption, which he views as a trick, but he misses the pleasure of the domesticated humanimal in the performance of its designated task.

The Primal Scenery of Domestication

Listening to B-Cleon's demystification of his role, P-Cleon feels his grip hand slacken, and B-Cleon seizes his advantage. He will move the scene of his father's jurisdiction from the city to the house by providing him with a teeny home court where his desire to punish can express itself to the full. Here a

21 Cf. B-Cleon's defense of Labes the dog in the home trial: Labes is a good dog, and chases after the wolves, even if he gets a bit out of hand at times (951).

22 *Pythian* 2.54–6. Pindar's term for Archilochus "fattening himself (παινόμενον) on heavy worded hatreds" is used by Aristotle, *History of Animals* 603b27, for the fattening of pigs, and by Euripides, *Cyclops* 333, for herd animals. See the discussion in Payne (2010) 28–9.

battle is waged between the emblems of the house and the emblems of the city. In the case to be tried, Dog 1 (Κύων Κυδαθηναίεύς) accuses Dog 2 (Λάβης Αἰξωνεύς) of unjustly eating a Sicilian cheese without sharing. The witnesses are a cup, a pestle, a cheese-grater, a brazier, and a kitchen-pot, followed by the rest of the kitchen utensils (938–39). B-Cleon tries to ensure that the proceedings go smoothly by having legal notice boards, charge statements, voting urns, and a water clock on hand (848–57). The case turns upon the question of whether Dog 2's guardianship of the sheep over whom he has been set makes up for his thievery. His puppies plead on behalf of their father, and a rigged vote produces an acquittal for the first time ever in P-Cleon's career as a juror.

The trial reenacts what is at issue between B-Cleon and P-Cleon in their understanding of what it is to be a juror in the figure of an animal that, for B-Cleon, emblemizes what democratic interpellation does to the democratic body. In their own self-understanding, P-Cleon and his fellow jurors are wasps, their jury service a manifestation of their "devotion to self-realization."²³ Being a juror is the unfolding, in a civic context, of an aggression that, like the aggression of wasps, is theirs by nature: an unmediated example of the way that *physis* manifests itself in *ethos*. The chorus describe their waspishness in terms of Athenian indigeneity: a natural masculinity that found expression in the war against the Persians who attacked their hives and whose over-culturation is emblemized in their silly baggy pants. The conclusion has the ring of a successful commercial: "Barbarians everywhere agree: nothing is more manly than an Attic wasp" (1075–90).

For B-Cleon, however, they are dogs, whose natural aggression has been artificially managed by the rulers of the polis to realize their own ambitions. It is not clear in what relationship these rulers stand to the apparatus of the democracy that they operationalize in order to produce the behaviors that they desire in the humanimals who act on their behalf. Are they administrators immunized to the effects of interpellation such that they stand outside the managed production of human capabilities? Or are they themselves an outcome of legality, considered as a total field of operations for the production of the human that produces P-Cleon and his comrades as another of its outcomes?

Fabían Romandini offers a compelling analysis of law as one of the anthropotechnologies that produce the human "as an *ek-stasis* of the animal condition" (an ecstasy of this condition because it is a standing out from it). Sustaining hominization as *ek-stasis* means never being done with the work of sacrifice and self-sacrifice with respect to the animal that produces the human

23 Whitman (1964) 144.

as this endlessly staged emergence from the animal.²⁴ With respect, then, to the non-appearance of the operators of the anthropotechnology of the law in *Wasps*, one might consider Peter Sloterdijk's suggestion that sustaining hominization as an ontological commandment to be neither animal nor god entails human beings coming to fear themselves as "the *Unheimliche*, the uncanny strangers."²⁵ The rulers occupy the site of invisibility that produces the scene of law, and the manifestation of the democratic body as P-Cleon and B-Cleon as a symptomatic response to it.

The unlocatability of what is known only by its symptoms explains why B-Cleon's challenge to the democratic regime and its instrumentalization of human *physis* is made in the name of, and using the apparatus of, the house. When B-Cleon and P-Cleon reappear after the parabasis in which the chorus voices its self-understanding as juridical wasps, whose business means circulating unceasingly in the public spaces of the city, B-Cleon is schooling P-Cleon in how to behave at a drinking party for which they are about to depart. P-Cleon wants to entertain the guests with fantastic stories, including one about how the monster Lamia farts when she is taken prisoner (1177). B-Cleon is horrified, but not so much by the lack of decorum, as by P-Cleon's lack of attention to the human condition. What he wants is not μῦθοι ("fables"), but "something about human beings, the kind of stories we usually tell, stories for telling at home (μὴ 'μοιγε μύθους, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων, | οἷους λέγομεν μάλιστα, τοὺς κατ' οἰκίαν)" (1179–80).

P-Cleon appears to misunderstand what B-Cleon is after. Instead of the kind of story that is typical and appropriate for telling at home, he offers a story about home, and about his home, in particular: "Once upon a time there was a mouse and a cat..." (1183). B-Cleon asks whether P-Cleon really means to tell a story about mice and cats to grownups (ἐν ἀνδράσιν—1185), but B-Cleon's dissent is not simply a disagreement over what constitutes appropriate behavior in polite society. Rather, the disagreement over how to present their house in public figures a fundamental difference in their understanding of what a house is.

B-Cleon thinks of the house as a boundary. It is, or should be, the border between human and animal, and it is also the border between self and other that constitutes the phenomenon of the neighbor, with the particular kind of obligation to the other that the this phenomenon entails. B-Cleon's courtyard net keeps P-Cleon from scaling the walls and making a nuisance of himself,

24 Romandini (2010) 11–3.

25 Sloterdijk (2011) 113–4.

while the home court is a way for P-Cleon to work off his compulsion for the law and the forms of sociality it enables. B-Cleon's mode of engagement with P-Cleon is to try to bring the behaviors that take him out of the house back home, where they can be managed in a form of behavioral therapy. By constituting the house as a boundary, P-Cleon sets a limit to the operation of the law, concretizing its operation in household objects, and terminating the propensity that it shares with other human discourses to foster humanity's nugatory self-aggrandizement.²⁶

B-Cleon conceives sociality at large as missions of diplomatic exchange between semi-autarkic households that are organized according to vertical structures of authority, and whose relations with other households are managed according to the proper conventions of etiquette among neighbors. P-Cleon, by contrast, imagines the household as the temporary coming together of whoever happens to be under its roof at any given time, cats and mice included, and he conceives of his sociality with his fellow jurors on the model of the herd, in which all of its members do the same thing at the same time.²⁷ P-Cleon's model of aggregation and dispersal is both prior to the constitution of the household and what beckons its demise in the dispersed collectivity of the contemporary city, whereas B-Cleon would return his father to the fold by invoking the house as the fundamental human technology, the foundational anthropotechnology by which the human being was drawn out and distinguished from the animal once and for all by being confined to one place.²⁸ B-Cleon's efforts to keep P-Cleon in the domestic compound by

26 Cf. *Birds* 1447: "By words the mind is lifted to the clouds, and humankind is exalted [ὕπὸ γὰρ λόγων ὁ νοῦς τε μετεωρίζεται ἐπαίρεται τ' ἄνθρωπος]."

27 On the human being as a dualizing animal, in Aristotle's terms, insofar as it alternates between solitary and herding behaviors, cf. Cooper (2005) 80–2 n. 5.

28 Wilson considers the relationship between domestication and sedentism as these are figured in the house as both "a dominant cultural symbol and a central rallying point and context for social organization and activity" (Wilson (1988) 4). Of particular interest for *Wasps* are Wilson's observations that with the institutionalization of sedentism, and its privileging of privacy as a value, herd behaviors (everyone doing something at the same time) are characterized as punitive and privative of what is essentially human (41); that the adoption of an architectural environment is responsible for the transition from a social order founded on focus and visibility to one founded on the boundary and invisibility (57–8); and that the anchoring of a person that comes with domestication results in the identification of person with location that Wilson calls "a merging of person and place" (71)—it is this consolidation of identity in the house that is particularly threatened by P-Cleon's social mobility and to which B-Cleon wishes to recall him.

throwing a net over it are an attempt to recapture his father's humanity by the very technology that marks off the human from the animal as δεινότατος in Sophocles' "Ode to Man," the foundational text for modern theorizations of human *Unheimlichkeit*.²⁹

Beyond Addiction

P-Cleon is both atavistic and ahead of his times; more immediate than B-Cleon in his gratification of bodily satisfactions, he also instantiates a danger from the future that B-Cleon wants to manage for the good of the household and the city. It is from this perspective that we should consider the mode of P-Cleon's attention. What appears on his cognitive radar, and what does his way of attending to it signify? P-Cleon likes things, and his attachment to the particulars of the juridical machinery looks like a familiar mode of comic hero attention whose natural form of expression is the list. In *Peace*, Trygaeus tells us that peace smells of harvest, parties, Dionysia, pipes, tragedians, songs of Sophocles, thrushes, Euripides' mini-words, ivy, wine strainer, bleating sheep, the breasts of women running through fields, drunk slave girl, overturned cup, and many other good things (*Peace* 530–9). In *Clouds*, Strepsiades' lists are a balance sheet that show him to be an astute connoisseur of the gains and losses of his upper class marriage. In the loss column are vintage wine, figs, fleeces, and abundance; in the gains column are perfume, saffron, tongue kisses, and spending, where the final entry in each column pokes fun at such tallying as a way of accounting for one's form of life (*Clouds* 50–2).

The list is an enactment of synecdochic realism, where each item is part of a form of life, but the point of listing is to resist higher level formulations, since higher level formulation is a departure from the form of life that the list instantiates. The refusal to be deprived of material singularities in the interest of ideological wholes marks a comic hero like Trygaeus as undecieved, his deconstructed attention a form of fidelity to what is truly viable in civic

29 See the lecture course on this chorus in Heidegger (1984) 51–97, which concludes with a discussion of the concentricity of the human being around the hearth and the city as this linkage appears in the chorus' rejection of whoever abuses technics in defiance of the regulations (νόμους) of the earth (*Antigone* 370–5). This linkage of the figure of the neighbor to the question of technics does not figure in the reflections on Heidegger, technics, and *Antigone* in Stiegler (1994) 1–18; and on Heidegger, the Greeks, and the uncanny in Sloterdijk (2011) 109–18. Cf. Harrison (2014) 10–6 on the juvenescent nihilism of this uncanny neophilia.

sociality. P-Cleon lives up to this model in many respects. At the drinking party that B-Cleon organizes to reintegrate him into what B-Cleon considers to be functional sociality, P-Cleon is exceptionally badly behaved (ὕβριστότατος—1303). After eating his fill, he skips around farting and making fun of people “like a little donkey that’s had too much barley.” Like Archilochus’ grain fed donkey of Priene, there is no keeping him down, and his enactment of his iambic inheritance as both a rejuvenation and an insouciant animality is noted by the other guests in what might be the beginning of a list: “Old man, you look like a newly rich vintage, or a donkey that’s nipped off to the granary [ἔοικας, ὦ πρεσβύτα, νεοπλούτῳ τρυγί | κλητῆρί τ’ εἰς ἀχυρμὸν ἀποδεδρακότι]” (1309–10).

P-Cleon is, of course, not the only one of Aristophanes’ comic heroes to be rejuvenated in the course of the play in which he appears. Trygaeus, most explicitly, is an old man become young again (*Peace* 860–1). P-Cleon, however, is rejuvenated without renouncing his commitment to the juridical singularities that figure him as a monster of democracy, watched over by the household slaves, at the beginning of the play (4). B-Cleon attempts to confine him to the house only result in a wider dispersion of his atavistic and hyper-modern energies, and this dispersion is enacted in his cooption of the aesthetic technologies that occupy the end of play.

In P-Cleon’s earlier identification with the chorus, their group identity was expressed by their common voicing of “archaio-melismatic Phrynichan Sidon songs [μέλη | ἀρχαίαι μελισιδωνοφρυνιχάρατα]” (219–20). Their aesthetic preferences are old-fashioned, like Better Argument’s untimely preference for old school poetry and old school sex in *Clouds* (961–83). At the end of *Wasps*, however, B-Cleon is watching his father perform ancient dance routines by Thespis in a way that—P-Cleon claims—show up contemporary innovations as Cronian by comparison (1481). Next we are promised a dance-off—P-Cleon live on stage with the three sons of Carcinus the Crab, or their dramatic representatives—but this dance-off turns out to be not agonistic after all, but an enactment of the integration of new and old that P-Cleon embodies in his own person.

P-Cleon, as an instantiation of rejuvenation, does not decide the play in favor of the new, but abolishes the difference between old and new that has structured its antagonistic characterology up to this point. In this moment, we move beyond the forensic model of the encounter into performative non-distinction. The exuberant mashup of aesthetic technologies outside of their historical and cultural situation affords a model for thinking retrospectively about the co-evolution of body and machine in political praxis, which is the problem on which the play opens. P-Cleon’s condition is diagnosed by the

slave, Xanthias, as agglutinative attachment to the material operators of political life: “-lover is the beginning of evil [‘φιλο-’ μέν ἐστιν ἡρχὴ τοῦ κακοῦ]” (76). As in the synecdochic realism of the list, language is imagined to enact this agglutinative relationship in structures that parallel the symptoms of the behavior itself: being Cleon-lover, Φιλοκλέων, is like being “dice-lover,” “drink-lover,” “sacrifice-lover,” “friend-lover,” “jury-lover,” or “song-lover” (φιλόκυβος, φιλοπότης, φιλοθύτης, φιλόξενος, φιληλιαστής, φιλωδός—74–88, 270). Being P-Cleon is not being able to detach oneself from the material inducements to democratic behavior of which Cleon is the synecdochic personification.

Being φιλο- would seem to name an agential modality of the kind that is most familiar to us in the philosopher, but in this play the agglutinative fusion of agent and activity denatures the agential behavior of the one who enters into it, such that it seems more appropriately described as a pathology. We call this condition addiction. The mirror condition of φιλο- agglutination is named βδελυ-, rather than the usual μισο-, and as such it designates a more full body rejection of the φιλο- condition. It is a refusal to combine that quarantines the subject against the loss of agency in the agglutinative condition, but it is produced by the same reagent that produces the φιλο-. P-Cleon and B-Cleon are two outcomes of the same pathology, two strains of somatic response to the material operators of democratic life.

What happens at the end of the play is neither φιλο- nor βδελυ-, but a movement outside the structure of addiction and rejection that is enacted in the person of P-Cleon. By becoming the locus of rejuvenation, the site in which the atavistic and the hyper-modern come together in an unstable performative hybrid, a break-up—a movement to the outside, and a fuller self-externalization—is accomplished in the figure of P-Cleon, with a massive dispersal of the accumulated energies of addiction and rejection. The forensic stasis instantiated in the standoff between P-Cleon and B-Cleon is exploded as P-Cleon’s destructured energies fill the stage in a danceathon of comic exultation. P-Cleon is no longer one figure in a pattern of structured opposition that gives the play its shape. He becomes one with the play itself, a synecdoche of comedy’s dream that life might be made continuous with itself.

Cedric Whitman describes this dream as the explosion of a single comic motif such that it fills the entire space of the world with endless iterations of itself. The gag goes viral within the space of the drama so that it becomes the only thing that is happening within that space:

It is funny when anybody gets hits by a custard pie, though it is funnier if an alderman gets hit with a custard pie; but it is funniest of all when everybody gets hit with custard pie . . . There is a superb example of this by Laurel and Hardy from the great period of slapstick movies.

The timing and development are flawless, and not a pie, of the several thousand that are thrown, misses its mark, or some mark. By the end—though the scene does not seem to end, but to continue toward a glorious eternity—the total *mise en scène*, an everyday street corner, is draped, inundated, and festooned with the squashy viscosity of custard and cream; men, women, buildings, dogs, and automobiles are transfigured in a perfect apocalypse of pie. The feeling which overtakes the spectator of this rapturous scene is more than a vicarious satisfaction of individual desire; it is a feeling of sublime peace, of an access of knowledge which is true, of a revelation of the essence of things. Custard pie has become a way of life and the world has been transformed by it.³⁰

With P-Cleon's occupation of the dramatic space at the end of the play, the play descends into danceathon in unprecedented fashion (1535–7). P-Cleon and Crab unleash a comic apocalypse that threatens to spill over into the audience before it can be ushered out of the theater, fulfilling the fantasy of humanimals in human places that the play has been straining to bring forth since its first adumbration in the dream visions of the household slaves (31–6):

ἔδοξε μοι περὶ πρῶτον ὕπνον ἐν τῇ πυκνῇ
ἐκκλησιάζειν πρόβατα συγκαθήμενα,
βακτηρίας ἔχοντα καὶ τριβῶνια:
κάπειτα τοῦτοις τοῖς προβάτοισι μούδοκει
δημηγορεῖν φάλλαινα πανδοκεύτρια,
ἔχουσα φωνὴν ἐμπεπρησμένης ὕδός.

Right when I went to sleep I dreamt that sheep were sitting in the assembly with walking sticks and little cloaks. Then some Knobulus started hassling them with the voice of a singed pig.

The humanimals were in the audience all along, and P-Cleon's dance with the Sons of Crab invites them to get off their butts and join in the action.

Lee Scratch Πέρυ: The Essential List

Listing is a gesture of comparison whose grounds need not be stated; we entrain to the gesture that puts Sophocles songs, roasted thrushes, and breasts in fields together, without needing to posit a reason over and above our entrainment

30 Whitman (1964) 275–6.

itself. I hope we can entrain to Aristophanes and Lee Scratch Perry for the sake of what their companionability might reveal about each other if we follow the gesture of entrainment to the end.³¹ Perry's early work resonates with the forensic structures that fascinate Aristophanes. His interest in the crime song; in the roughneck as a super-agent whose powers come from his being a man of the agora; in the back and forth between competing producers in the fickle court of public taste; in the modulation between *ad hominem* attack songs and high concept productions imagined on a cosmic scale—all have their parallels in Aristophanes. Perry himself has many of the characteristics of Aristophanes' comic heroes: his early life is spent as a goatherd in rural Jamaica, from where he progresses to the Dungle, a notorious Kingston ghetto on the edge of the municipal garbage dump, where he becomes Jamaica's most notorious dancer.³² One thinks of Sausage Seller in *Knights*, raised in the Agora, where men are what they are, and who gets his schooling in how to get on in that world within earshot of the singeing of slaughtered swine.³³

Perry, however, becomes his own comic hero, whose nicknames include Scratch; the Upsetter; Super Ape; the Croaking Lizard ("a mighty reptile from prehistoric times when dinosaurs ruled the earth, his very croak a form of music");³⁴ Doctor Sea Bat Nature Defender; Piss, Poop, Shit & Spit. Perry becomes these alter egos such that "he actually lives that character's experience for a time," and he creates the Black Ark studio with cheap equipment intended for domestic use, rather than professional grade recording technology, to realize their sounds.³⁵ The studio's landmark production is *Super Ape*, a dub concept album, in which "the link between man and animal [is] made symbolically explicit."³⁶ He moves to England and works with The Clash, claiming, "I am really a punk, that's why I cannot be controlled"; he burns down Black Ark (or it burns down by itself: the fire is "firmly in the realm of legend"); he makes *Time Boom X De Devil Dead* with Adrian Sherwood and Dub Syndicate ("Blinkers," from *Time Boom*, features Perry "making comments on the necessity of passing waste over a rhythm filled with the sounds of

31 This part of the argument—"why do comparative literature"—follows Saussy (2011): you won't know why until you have done it, because the intuition to compare is just that—an intuition.

32 This narrative is collated from David Katz's unbeatable biography. For a taste of Perry in person, see Heath (2011). For an insightful appreciation of his music, see Toop (2001) 87–119.

33 *Knights* 293, 333–4, 636, 1235.

34 Katz (2006) 243.

35 Katz (2006) 59.

36 Katz (2006) 175–6, 244.

collapsing buildings, electric drills and breaking glass"); he moves to Switzerland and sort of works with Dieter Meier to produce *Technomajikal*; he renounces meat, alcohol, and marijuana: "Animal rights come first, not human rights, because we were all animals before we became humans on this planet Earth."³⁷

The humanimal, then, has been a constant of Perry's thinking, and a constant figure for the rediscovery of his own musicality. The animal supervenes on an all-too-human culture world as the possibility of returning the human being to a salvific enactment of its place in the continuum of being as a whole by way of an enhancement of the technicity of music, such that technology, as a prosthetic extension of human musical capacity, becomes the portal of the natural, what gives the human being back to itself as humanimal.³⁸ Black Ark featured a pond for water birds in the drum booth because "birds are the power of the air."³⁹ More recently Perry has insisted on his music's origination in a response to the beauty of the natural world:

I believe in trees, plants, flowers, roses, earth, wind and fire, water, rain, nature, storm, hurricane, tidal wave, I believe in the sea, and I believe in sun, I believe in river and I believe in river-stone and I believe in the earth and I believe in rock-stone and I believe in nature's grace.⁴⁰

His emphasis is on the power of particular features of the natural world to overcome the human tendency to addiction, and on the opportunity that particular places afford for agglutinative recombination with natural phenomena: "I am addicted to rock-stone. And Switzerland had lots of lovely rock-stone. I like ice as well. I am so addicted to ice. It make me feel very fresh. I love to see. It's like a beauty to my eyesight."⁴¹ The studio in which the work that enables this transformative recombination is done is an ark: "You have to

37 Katz (2006) 273, 355, 379, 400.

38 Toop analyzes the constituents of the style: mechanical modifications, such as "drop-out, extreme equalisation, long delay, short delay, space echo, reverb, flange, phase, noise gates, echo feedback, shotgun snare drums, rubber bass, zipping highs, cavernous lows"; extraneous non-musical sounds, such as animals and crying babies; signature instrumentation and vocals, such as "rattling hand drums and scrapers, ghostly voices, distant horn sections, unusual snare and hi-hat treatments, groans and reptilian sibilations, odd perspectives and depth illusions, sound effects, unexpected noises and echoes that repeat to infinity" (Toop (2001) 116–8).

39 Katz (2006) 332.

40 From Heath (2011).

41 From Heath (2011).

be the Ark to save the animals and nature and music.” But it is also “a space craft,” because you can only be an ark by being a site where the practice of the future happens.⁴²

Hearing the *Teknon* in *Techne*

Whatever actually caused the fire at Black Ark, there is no doubt about the meaning of the event for Perry himself. It was a protest against the musealization of what had been produced inside it, whose counterpart is Perry’s insistence on the relationship between infancy and technics:

It is not possible for the music to get old because the music is a baby, and the music refuse to grow old. The music refuse to get cold . . . My music refuse to die, my music refuse to be an adult, my music will be a baby for all the time.⁴³

The claim that a particular modality of art production evinces a condition of permanent youthfulness that is capable of producing rejuvenation in others is familiar to scholars of Greek literature, for it is Schiller’s claim about the naturalness of early Greek literature. The naturalness of the child is evidenced in the fact that “the child looks simply at the need and at the means closest at hand for satisfying it,” and the Greeks are modernity’s children because they “had not lost the nature in humanity.” The Greeks felt naturally, whereas we (moderns) feel the natural: their feeling for the natural in humanity is therefore of the same kind as our feeling for them: it is our only portal to the naturalness lost from our own lives.⁴⁴

For Schiller, Greek literature might be the secret ingredient in a *teknomajikal* rejuvenation of modern life, but *Wasps* actually enacts the possibility for self-rejuvenation within the form of life to which modernity aspires. Its secret for perpetual youth is the capacity of what has once been young to reproduce itself as young by avoiding the temptation towards artificiality—

⁴² Perry, cited in Toop (2001) 114.

⁴³ From Heath (2011). Cf. the claim on the cover of *Technomajikal*: “I’m making future music for future children.” On Perry’s long standing commitment to the claim of future youth, see Clive Chin: “He knew that to have young people around him gave him a chance to advance more, and he liked new ideas: He wasn’t a man who was stuck in the old ways. He was open to different sound and his ideology was beyond its time” (Sullivan (2014) 43).

⁴⁴ Schiller (1998) 186, 195.

to becoming artifice—in fixation upon the beautiful life: “The entire edifice of their social life was erected on feelings, not on some clumsy work of art.”⁴⁵ In *Wasps*, as in the work of Lee Perry, technics are the means by which naturalness leaps beyond the claims of the beautiful life, grabbing whatever is at hand to express its feelings, just as Schiller claims that children do.

45 Schiller (1998) 195.

Branding Irony: Comedy and Crafting the Public Persona¹

Donna Zuckerberg

Thucydides famously predicted that, in the distant future, a person looking at the ruins of Sparta would believe the stories of its power had been exaggerated. A person looking at the ruins of Athens, on the other hand, would believe the city had been twice as powerful as it had truly been (1.10). Thucydides' vision could as easily be used to describe the fragments of Old Comedy as it does the ruins of the great fifth-century πόλεις: from what remains, Aristophanes appears at least twice as dominant a comedian as he truly was, and his competitors seem even less of a threat to his supremacy than he depicts them as. But just as Thucydides' assessment does not deny Athens' power, giving proper consideration to Aristophanes' rivals ought not imply that Aristophanes' impact was imaginary. It was exaggerated, perhaps, but significant nonetheless.

It may seem odd to begin with a defense of Aristophanes against an imagined claim of irrelevance—after all, this volume is predicated on the idea that Aristophanes' impact on his audiences throughout the past 2500 years has a fascinating and rich history. However, scholars have a tendency to doubt that Aristophanes had much influence in his own lifetime. Stephen Halliwell refers to comedy's "implicit impotence . . . its inability to exert a practical influence on social and political life."² In this view, Aristophanes is both more and less influential than he asserts: on the one hand, he never even thought to boast that his plays would still be read and studied two and a half millennia after his death, but his claims about his impact in his own time are reduced to delusions of grandeur.

Doubt over the extent of Aristophanes' impact is not entirely unjustified, considering his tendency to praise his own work in extravagant terms (*Peace* 734–8, 748–50):

1 This chapter is partly adapted from the first chapter of my dissertation. As such, I would like to acknowledge the useful feedback of my advisers Brooke Holmes, Helene Foley, and Andrew Ford.

2 Halliwell (1984) 8; on Aristophanes' lack of influence, see also Stow (1942).

χρὴν μὲν τύπτειν τοὺς ῥαβδούχους, εἴ τις κωμωδοποιητῆς
 αὐτὸν ἐπῆγει πρὸς τὸ θέατρον παραβάς ἐν τοῖς ἀναπαίστοις·
 εἰ δ' οὖν εἰκός τινα τιμῆσαι, θύγατερ Διός, ὅστις ἄριστος
 κωμωδοδιδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων καὶ κλεινότατος γεγένηται,
 ἄξιός ἐῖναι φησ' εὐλογίας μεγάλης ὁ διδάσκαλος ἡμῶν . . .
 τοιαῦτ' ἀφελὼν κακὰ καὶ φόρτον καὶ βωμολοχεύματ' ἀγεννῇ
 ἐποίησε τέχνην μεγάλην ἡμῖν κἀπύργωσ' οἰκοδομήσας
 ἔπεσιν μεγάλαις καὶ διανοαῖς καὶ σκώμμασιν οὐκ ἀγοραίοις.

The staff-bearers ought to strike any comedian who praises himself to the theater in his parabasis. But, Muse, if it is right to honor the man who is the very best writer of comedies and make sure he is most famous, then our poet says he deserves much praise . . . for he has removed all these bad jokes and the rubbish and low vulgarity, and he has created for us fine art and fortified a great edifice with his great words and thoughts and original jokes.³

While claims such as this one certainly should not be taken at face value, concerns over Aristophanes' impact on his contemporaries are often predicated on a very narrow conception of what constitutes "influence," just as claims that comedy cannot be considered "serious" rely on strict definitions of what constitutes "seriousness."⁴

Aristophanes mocked the politician Cleon mercilessly, to the extent that—supposedly—Cleon threatened him with prosecution after the *Babylonians*.⁵ Nevertheless, Cleon's political career does not seem to have suffered for Aristophanes' mockery; he remained a popular and successful politician in Athens until his death at Amphipolis in 422 BC. But was Aristophanes' goal truly to destroy Cleon's political standing, and if so, was his failure a sign he had no influence at all on Cleon's reputation? When the comedian Jon Stewart ended his sixteen-year run on the *Daily Show* in August 2015, Roger Ailes (president of Fox News, one of Stewart's favorite targets) noted triumphantly that Stewart "never made a dent" in Fox News' ratings. He speculated that Stewart had done his best to destroy Fox, and he must be "disappointed that he didn't accomplish

3 All translations are my own.

4 Silk (2000) 301–49.

5 This is how, since antiquity, the references at *Acharnians* 377–82, 502–3, 515–6, 576–7, and 630–1 have been taken. See Olson (2002) xxix–xxx for a fuller description, along with Sommerstein (1996) 332–3. Rosen (1988) 63–4 casts doubt on whether the prosecution occurred.

that goal, and we, of course, supplied him with half of his comedy.”⁶ But would anyone aside from Ailes argue that Stewart had done nothing to tarnish Fox News’ “fair and balanced” brand?

Aristophanes’ influence cannot be measured by whether he annihilated his targets, just as the success of his career cannot be determined solely by the number of victories he won in comic contests. Comedians refer to comic victories often in their parabases and claim to take great offense at being defeated, but there is evidence that this kind of rhetoric might be posturing rather than true anger.⁷ Destruction and survival, victory and loss: these are simple, either/or dichotomies, relatively easy for us to measure. Comic influence is often far subtler and more difficult to detect and quantify.

Comedy is part of a discursive process of cultural negotiation. It often functions as a site where the issues that bother members of a society—the complicated, problematic concerns that people feel conflicted over and experience cognitive dissonance about—are worked out in an elaborate, fantastical manner. Mikhail Bakhtin’s studies on the “carnavalesque” have been deservedly influential on the study of Aristophanes.⁸ But the carnival setting of comic performance does not imply, as Halliwell suggests, that it has no influence whatsoever on society after the carnival ends.⁹ Through mockery and caricature, comedy often works to crystallize the essential (i.e., most ridiculous and absurd) aspects characterizing an important individual or event. These caricatures can leave an impression long after the comic chorus leaves the stage. This dynamic is especially clear in the evidence from twenty-first century comedy, which has surprising similarities with Athenian Old Comedy.

The public personas of Aristophanes’ favorite targets—his competitors Cratinus and Eupolis, along with Cleon, Socrates, and especially Euripides—can therefore profitably be viewed as sites of Aristophanic reception. Aristophanes’ comedies defined for his audience who these individuals *really* were: the most characteristic traits that made them especially recognizable and mockable. No matter how reductive or distorted these representations were, they were obviously influential: in Plato’s *Apology*, Socrates reads aloud his indictment and argues that the Socrates being prosecuted resembles Aristophanes’ “Socrates” character in *Clouds* more than Socrates himself (*Apology* 19b–c). Aristophanes’ comic mockery was difficult to ignore: instead, his targets seem

6 Bond (2015).

7 Wright argues that this “anger” at having lost is likely to have been a rhetorical stance and that winning or losing was not of much concern to comedians (Wright (2012) 31–69).

8 Bakhtin (1968) 11–2; Carriere (1979); and Goldhill (1991) 176–87. See also Platter in this volume.

9 Halliwell (1984) 13, contextualized in Walsh (2009).

to have embraced and built upon his caricatures. Our understanding of what characterized these individuals is still today heavily colored by Aristophanes' mockery.

Aristophanes' comedy often functions by creating characters that map, with varying degrees of accuracy, onto his favorite targets. His "Euripides" is a distorted image of the tragedian, just as his "Socrates" and "Cleon" and "Cratinus" may only slightly resemble the individuals he mocks. Even his "Aristophanes," the first-person voice that sometimes purports to break the fourth wall and address the audience directly in his parabases, has a slippery relationship to the poet himself. Aristophanic scholarship has tended to refer to this "Aristophanes" as a "persona," but the term "persona" is limited in that it refers only to the construct that stands in for the playwright as a person as opposed to marking out the key elements that constitute his unique style.¹⁰ Making fun of Euripides is not necessarily a key element of Aristophanes' parabolic self-representation, but it was a crucial aspect of Aristophanic comedy. I use the words "brand" and "branding" to describe this process of defining and refining what it meant to be Aristophanic (or Cratinean, or Euripidean).

A brand is more than a physical mark that differentiates a product from another similar product: it is the set of mental associations consumers have with that product.¹¹ Branding is a process of self-definition that creates instant, (hopefully) pleasurable recognition in the eyes of the consumer. The ultimate goal of branding is to create *brand loyalty*, the perception among consumers that any product that is produced by their favored brand is automatically desirable. On the other hand, when companies have *brand parity*, consumers perceive little distinction between different products and therefore do not feel loyalty. Brand parity explains why most people will fill up their cars with gas from whichever station has the cheapest price.

For an auteur or performer, having a recognizable brand typically means that viewers who enjoyed your previous work will become a reliable audience

10 Best expressed by Bakola (2008) 1 n. 4: "Poetic self-presentation involves the construction and projection of an identity and a character in the course of a poem or an oeuvre. This is usually termed 'persona'. Construction of a persona involves a varying degree of 'fictionalisation' of an author's character, and the degree of correspondence between fiction and reality may consequently fluctuate. Not only may aspects of the persona correspond to or diverge from the historical author's identity and character to a greater or lesser degree, but also, across a poet's oeuvre and from poem to poem, the constructed persona can either be relatively consistent or shift according to the needs of a particular performance."

11 Millman (2011).

for future performances. The incorporation of signature elements into your work also provides unique opportunities for artists, including the ability to place a distinctively personal stamp on pre-existing art forms and properties (such as when a famous director is brought into a major movie franchise, or when an Attic tragedian produces a version of a well-known myth). Most importantly, it allows for the creation of a coherent body of work while still crafting a narrative of development and reinvention over time.¹²

Used in reference to Aristophanic comedy, of course, this terminology is inherently anachronistic. Although the process of branding animals or goods to mark the owner or creator is an ancient one, the modern idea of a company or individual having an intangible, conceptual brand as an asset seems to originate after the Industrial Revolution, gaining prominence in the twentieth century and becoming widespread after World War II.¹³ There is a certain irony in the idea: when mass-market goods became widely available and difficult to differentiate, producers needed to create brand identities to explain why one type of cigarette (for instance) was superior to another, nearly indistinguishable type. Modern branding therefore presupposes a degree of uniformity that belies any company's pretensions to uniqueness. And while performers and artists are now seen as cultivating personal brands to sell to consumers, the economic relationship between Aristophanes and his audience was far less direct a mode of self-commodification than exists today.¹⁴

One could make arguments for why this anachronism is less dangerous than it seems. First, the construction of a brand is similar in essence to the well-studied dynamics in Old Comedy of comedians manipulating each other's personas: both terms describe the distillation of the key characteristics of an artist's (or company's) distinctive style. And if my use of the word "characteristics" in the previous sentence did not feel problematic, recall that the Greek word *χαρακτήρ* literally means "brand," and Diogenes Laertius attests that the philosopher Theophrastus' book describing different character-types was given the title *Χαρακτήρες ἠθικοί*.¹⁵ However, while I could certainly defend my use of the term "brand" against the charge of anachronism on these philological grounds, doing so might suggest that criticizing the use of anachronistic terminology in comic scholarship is a useful endeavor. In fact, I believe the opposite is true: the use of twenty-first century terminology and references to

12 Holt figures brands as having "stories" with plots and characters (Holt (2004) 3).

13 Bastos and Levy (2012) 350–7.

14 On the ethics of personal branding, see Lair, Sullivan, and Cheney (2005).

15 Diggle (2004) 5.

popular culture is entirely appropriate for the study of Aristophanes in general and Aristophanic reception in particular.

Many references I make in this chapter will soon seem outdated. Some are outdated already. For example, I have often utilized a comparison with Tina Fey's Sarah Palin impersonation on *Saturday Night Live* during the 2008 presidential election to explain how Aristophanes' mockery helped his targets, especially Euripides, to create distinctive persona. I still believe the comparison is apt: the parodic character was so successful that audiences became unable to distinguish the true Palin from Fey's "Palin," to the extent that many still believe Palin actually said she could see Russia from her Alaska home, and political scientists in 2012 coined the term "Fey Effect" to describe how young Republicans were less likely to take Palin seriously after seeing Fey's impersonation.¹⁶ The success of Fey's Palin impression certainly boosted Fey's career, bringing higher ratings to *30 Rock*, the television show she wrote, produced, and starred in.¹⁷ But the real Palin seems to have benefitted too, capitalizing on the popularity of Fey's character in her own self-characterization as a folksy hockey mom to leverage her own television show.

This dynamic is remarkably similar to how Aristophanes' literary targets responded to his mockery: like Palin, they seem to have mostly accepted the broad strokes of Aristophanes' characterizations and adopted them into their own personas. In *Wine-Flask*, as I will show, Cratinus enthusiastically co-opted Aristophanes' depiction of him as an alcoholic in *Knights*, and Euripides certainly did not stop staging kings in rags after Aristophanes' mockery of the trope in *Acharnians*. Both acknowledged the influence Aristophanes had on the public perception of what characterized their works. Aristophanes' own brand was also defined through these interactions: he became known for his mockery of Euripides, just as Fey's Palin impression was so popular that she reprised it in 2014 for *SNL*'s fortieth anniversary.

Although this comparison is useful, it is hardly current: Palin has largely ceased to be part of the political scene since she resigned from her post as Governor of Alaska in 2009, and although Fey won an Emmy award in 2009 for her impersonation, she has since gone on to do many other well-received projects. Including this example, the references and terminology I use throughout this chapter situate me as somebody whose cultural taste was formed in America in the 1990's and the early aughts. The youngest readers of this volume, and those from outside the United States, may already be confused. But this dilemma begs the question: is it possible to analyze Aristophanes in a

16 Baumgartner, Morris, and Walth (2012).

17 Dowd (2009).

manner that would not exclude some readers, but would be accessible to all? Aristophanes' own comedies tread a fine line between the universally funny and the almost inaccessibly specific. Some of his jokes are nearly impossible to understand for anyone lacking a near-native knowledge of ancient Athenian geography and culture.¹⁸ For this reason, many of his plays are notoriously difficult to translate,¹⁹ while others—especially *Lysistrata*—lend themselves well to adaptation in a wide variety of settings.²⁰

Considering these factors, I have chosen to write this chapter about Aristophanes' reception in his own time with full understanding that my reading is itself an example of early twenty-first century Aristophanic reception in America. Attempting to analyze Aristophanic reception in a manner that is not culturally specific seems to me to be an inherently self-defeating project. I do not mean to suggest, however, that the contemporary comedians referred to in this chapter, such as Tina Fey and Hannibal Buress, were directly influenced by Aristophanes. Instead, I believe that it can be a valuable exercise in my twenty-first century reading of Aristophanes' contemporary reception to read these comedians from very different eras alongside one another.

Brand Strategy in Old Comedy

In recent years, scholars have devoted a great deal of effort to returning Aristophanes' rivals to their rightful place as brilliant innovators in the comic genre after decades of accepting Aristophanes' construction of himself as the τέλος of comedy.²¹ After all, one might wonder if Aristophanes would have needed to be quite so vocal about his superiority if it were uncontested. The

18 MacDowell (1995).

19 Arrowsmith (1960) addresses these challenges.

20 Stuttard (2010). Although many of these *Lysistrata* adaptations, such as Spike Lee's 2015 film *Chi-raq*, take on the serious aspects of the play's anti-war battle between the sexes, there have been a few notably unserious versions recently, including the 2011 Broadway show *Lysistrata Jones* and, in the same year, the young adult novel *Shut Out*.

21 Consider, for instance, Sommerstein's section title referring to all of Aristophanes' contemporaries as "Minor Comedians" (Sommerstein (2002a) 75–6); or Silk: "It seems clear that Aristophanes was consistently an innovator, so that 'generic' might often only mean a feature popularised by Aristophanes himself" (Silk (2000) 6).

victory records show that his two main competitors, Cratinus and Eupolis, both won many comic contests as well.²²

For Aristophanes, the construction of what it meant to be Aristophanic was an ongoing process that involved intentional response to other poets' challenges. Aristophanes participated in fierce persona struggles with both of his major rivals. In his competition with his contemporary Eupolis, which has been deemed "the war of the poets," the two comedians frequently accused each other of plagiarism and a lack of originality. These arguments center around the authorship of *Knights* and the extent to which Eupolis' *Maricas* copied it,²³ although most scholars now agree that accusations of plagiarism in Old Comedy are in large part conventional and meant to counter rivals' bragging declarations of their own originality and innovative brilliance.²⁴ Aristophanes, Cratinus, and Eupolis all identify the hallmarks of their own styles and use them to fashion a unique comic brand.

They were also very sensitive to other poets' attempts to encroach upon that self-representation. Once a persona was established, it was fair game for other poets to manipulate and mock to their own ends. Emmanuela Bakola argues that Aristophanes represented himself as a healer of the city, Cratinus represented himself as an inspired poet, and Eupolis represented himself as a teacher. But in the hands of their competitors, Aristophanes became a quack, Cratinus a drunk, and Eupolis a pedophile.²⁵ The comedians then had the

22 On Eupolis, see Storey (2003a) and Telò (2007). On Cratinus, see Bakola (2010). Olson (2007) provides detailed commentary on a limited number of fragments, while Rusten (2011) collects, edits, and translates nearly every comic fragment of note.

23 The fragments of this exchange are: *Knights* 1224f. and Σ *Knights* 1224; Σ *Knights* 1291; *Clouds* 551–6; Ar. fr. 58 KA; Eup. fr. 89 KA; Crat. fr. 213. Heath argues that despite similarities between *Knights* and *Maricas*, the latter was "certainly not a mindless reproduction" (Heath (1990) 153). See also Ruffell (2011) 367. For this "war" more generally, see Storey (2003a) 278–303; and Kyriakidi (2007).

24 See Halliwell (1989) on collaboration, and Heath on the construction of a "comic repertoire" from which all comedians could draw while accusing each other of plagiarism (Heath (1990) 152). Biles argues that the two might have collaborated because they were allies in an intergenerational conflict pitting younger poets like Aristophanes and Eupolis against the older poets like Cratinus (Biles (2001) 199–200). Ruffell rejects all of these models and argues, "Comic interactions should instead, I argue here, be seen as diverse and flexible, but based around the twin moves of repetition and innovation, within an overarching context of aesthetic, cultural, and political competition" (Ruffell (2011) 362–3).

25 Bakola (2008) is the only study of this phenomenon as concerns Aristophanes' reformer (see 4–6, where she also analyzes the Solonian elements of this persona) and Eupolis' teacher personas (20–6), although Cratinus' drunk persona is well-understood. For the

challenge of retaking control over their respective personas. This “intertextual biography” has been the subject of number of articles in recent years.²⁶ Maintaining control over one’s own persona was a difficult task for a comedian, one requiring vigilance and effort. With only a few carefully chosen words, a competitor could easily corrupt a persona and make it appear ridiculous; reconstruction required far more energy, to the extent that both Cratinus and Eupolis devoted entire plays to the task of reshaping their personas back into more favorable forms. The constructs of Cratinus’ and Eupolis’ personas were fashioned through this mocking dialectic with Aristophanes. The perception of the fifth-century audience, and even still today, of what defined these comedians’ distinctive brands was in large part a product of Aristophanes’ influence and reception.

The careers of Cratinus and Aristophanes intersected for only a few years: Aristophanes’ first play, *Banqueters*, was produced in 427, and Cratinus seems to have no longer been active after around 421.²⁷ Despite the brevity of this overlap, the competition between the two poets between 425 and 422 produced a sequence of comedies—Aristophanes’ *Acharnians*, *Knights*, *Clouds*, and *Wasps* and Cratinus’ *Wine-Flask*—that exemplify the phenomenon of critiquing each other’s poetic brands through a struggle over personas. In

elements of his self-representation involving natural imagery like flowing rivers, see also Rosen (2000) 30–1. Bakola puts it very nicely: “These images (as well as the poet’s self-association with Dionysus more generally) suggest that at the heart of Cratinus’ self-constructed poetic image was a nexus of complementary and interrelated ideas and metaphors which placed the emphasis on spontaneity, fluency, artistic fertility, natural genius. This, as we will see below, appears especially striking in comparison with the more ‘intellectual’ and ‘technical’ kind of poetics with which Cratinus associates Aristophanes and Aristophanes to some degree associates himself” (Bakola (2008) 14–5).

26 The forerunners to these studies are Heath (1990) 149–51; and Sidwell (1995) on “ventriloquial paracomedy,” a concept that paved the way for more recent and well-received studies such as Luppe (2000); Rosen (2000); Biles (2002); Ruffell (2002) and (2011) 361–426; Zanetto (2006); and Revermann (2006a) 5–7, 19–24.

27 The date of *Banqueters* is attested from P.Oxy. 2737, lines 3–5. Although 421 is usually considered the date of Cratinus’ death, the only evidence is a testimonium of uncertain value from Aristophanes’ *Peace* 700–1 (ἀπέθανεν ὅθ’ οἱ Λάκωνες ἐνέβαλον [“he died when the Laconians invaded”]). ἀπέθανεν seems unambiguous, but the issue is more complicated than this vocabulary choice would lead one to believe. The first and most obvious problem is that we know of no Laconian invasion in 422; see Rosen (1988) 38 n. 4 for a brief literature review. Furthermore, at *Peace* 702–3, Trygaeus says Cratinus “fainted dead away; he couldn’t bear to see a cask full of wine broken” (ῥακιάσας: οὐ γὰρ ἐξηγέσχετο / ἰδὼν πίθον καταγνύμενον οἶνου πλέων). The words ἀπέθανεν and ἐξηγέσχετο seem to be at odds; has Cratinus passed away, or just passed out?

these plays, Aristophanes rhetorically distorts Cratinus' poetics of Dionysiac inspiration into the ravings of a drunk, senile old man, while Cratinus manipulates Aristophanes' claims of cleverness into empty sophistry.

Cratinus' name appears twice in Aristophanes' earliest extant comedy, *Acharnians* (425 BC). Cratinus is first mentioned in a list of people whom Dicaeopolis will not have to tolerate in the ἀγορά, described as "having an adulterer's haircut" (Κρατίνος αἰεὶ κεκαρμένος μοιχὸν μὲν μαχαίρᾳ—line 849).²⁸ The second mention of Cratinus in *Acharnians* comes at the end of the chorus' curse against Antimachus (1162–73), where Cratinus is depicted as the type of person who could reasonably be found in a κῶμος with "drunk Orestes." Aristophanes, a newcomer onto the Old Comedy scene, used these references to Cratinus to help solidify his position in relation to a rival who was already established within the genre. Aristophanes is mocking not Cratinus himself, but Cratinus' persona, and his descriptions of the older comedian as a drunk and an adulterer are meant as a commentary on his poetics more than his personal habits. What appears to be an insult to his messy deportment and attire are actually references to the sloppiness of Cratinus' comedies, a motif that Aristophanes derived from Cratinus himself, who in one fragment declares that his poetic inspiration is so overwhelming that it cannot be controlled.²⁹

Although these mentions of the older comedian are brief, they begin a pattern of mockery that Aristophanes expanded upon the next year in *Knights*, where the attacks on Cratinus are far more pointed (*Knights* 526–36):

εἶτα Κρατίνου μεμνημένος, δς πολλῶ ρεύσας ποτ' ἐπαίνῳ
 διὰ τῶν ἀφελῶν πεδίῳ ἔρρει, καὶ τῆς στάσεως παρασύρων
 ἐφόρει τὰς δρυὺς καὶ τὰς πλατάνους καὶ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς προθυλύνους·
 ἄσαι δ' οὐκ ἦν ἐν ξυμποσίῳ πλὴν 'Δωροὶ συκοπέδιλε,
 καὶ 'τέκτονες εὐπαλάμων ὕμνων· οὕτως ἦνθησεν ἐκεῖνος.
 νυνὶ δ' ὑμεῖς αὐτὸν ὀρώντες παραληροῦντ' οὐκ ἐλεεῖτε,
 ἐκπιπτοῦσάν τῶν ἡλέκτρων καὶ τοῦ τόνου οὐκέτ' ἐνόντος

28 Olson (2002) *ad loc.* suggests that this could imply either that Cratinus was trying to "resemble a stylish young man," an incongruous and ridiculous appearance for an old man, or that he was so careless about his appearance that he looked like a man whose head had been shaved by a cuckolded husband.

29 Fr. 198, ἀναξ Ἀπολλων, τῶν ἐπῶν τοῦ ρεύματος, / καναχοῦσι πηγαί· δωδεκάκρουνον <τὸ> στόμα, / Ἴλιος ἐν τῇ φάρυγι· τί ἂν εἴποιμ' <ἔτι>; / εἰ μὴ γὰρ ἐπιβύσει τις αὐτοῦ τὸ στόμα, / ἅπαντα ταῦτα κατακλύσει ποιήμασιν ("Good God, what a flow of words! / Streams splattering, mouth twelve-spouted, / Ilissos in his gullet. Words fail me! / If someone doesn't shut his gob / He'll flood the whole place with poetry!"). See Rosen (2000) 30–1.

τῶν θ' ἄρμονιῶν διαχασκουσῶν: ἀλλὰ γέρων ὦν περιέρρει,
 ὥσπερ Κοννάς, στέφανον μὲν ἔχων αὖτον δίψῃ δ' ἀπολωλώς,
 ὃν χρῆν διὰ τὰς προτέρας νίκας πίνειν ἐν τῷ πρυτανείῳ,
 καὶ μὴ ληρεῖν ἀλλὰ θεᾶσθαι λιπαρὸν παρὰ τῷ Διονύσῳ.

The poet remembers Cratinus, who once flowed over smooth plains in a torrent of praise, uprooting and sweeping away oaks, plane-trees, and rival poets. Nobody sang any song in a symposium except “fig-sandaled Doro” and “fashioners of skillfully-wrought hymns,” that’s how popular he was. But you don’t even pity him when you see him babbling now; his lyre has no tuning-pegs or strings. The old man meanders around like Connas, wearing a dried-out wreath, perishing of thirst when he should be toasted in the Prytaneum because of his past victories, and instead of acting like a fool he should watch the dramas from the front row, next to the statue of Dionysus, anointed with perfume.

Cratinus was likely neither extremely old nor had failing mental powers; Malcolm Heath argues that Cratinus might have been under 60 years old, and since he had won the comic competition of 426 and come in second place in 425, he is unlikely to have been senile.³⁰ Aristophanes’ portrait of a comedian who has not had a victory in so long that his wreaths have dried up is clearly a distortion rather than an accurate reflection of reality.

In addition to the long attack on Cratinus in the parabasis, there is also a brief jab against the older poet earlier in the play, when the chorus says, “If I do not hate you, may I be made a blanket in Cratinus’ home” (εἴ σε μὴ μισῶ, γενοίμην ἐν Κρατίνου κώδιον—line 400). A scholion on the line suggests that Aristophanes is implying here that Cratinus’ drunkenness has led him to become incontinent, hence the danger of being a blanket in his house. The most important part of this scholion on *Knights* 400 is not this potentially questionable interpretation of Aristophanes’ insult,³¹ but its description of Cratinus’ reaction to Aristophanes’ abuse (*Wine-Flask* test. ii K–A):

Κρατίνου κώδιον: κώδιόν ἐστι τὸ ἅμα τοῖς ἐρίοις δέρμα σκευαζόμενον. ὡς ἐνουρητὴν δὲ καὶ μέθυσον διαβάλλει τὸν Κρατίνον. ὁ δὲ Κρατίνος καὶ αὐτὸς

³⁰ Heath (1990) 149.

³¹ Ruffell argues, however, that the audience’s first mental association with incontinence would be not drunkenness, but old age. Neither interpretation is clearly preferable, since Aristophanes mocked both Cratinus’ old age and his drunkenness in *Acharnians* (Ruffell (2002) 145).

ἀρχαίας κωμωδίας ποιητής, πρεσβύτερος Ἀριστοφάνους, τῶν εὐδοκίμων ἄγαν. γενοίμην οὖν, φησίν, εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν Κρατίνου κῶδιον, ὥστε μου κατουρεῖν ἐκεῖνον, εἰ μὴ σε μισῶ. ὅπερ μοι δοκεῖ παροξυνθεῖς ἐκεῖνος, καίτοι τοῦ ἀγωνίζεσθαι ἀποστάς καὶ συγγράφειν, πάλιν γράφει δρᾶμα, τὴν Πυτίνην, εἰς αὐτόν τε καὶ τὴν μέθην, οἰκονομία τε κεχρημένον τοιαύτη.³² τὴν Κωμωδίαν ὁ Κρατίνος ἐπλάσατο αὐτοῦ εἶναι γυναῖκα καὶ ἀφίστασθαι τοῦ συνοικεσίου τοῦ σὺν αὐτῷ θέλειν, καὶ κακώσεως αὐτῷ δίκην λαγχάνειν.

Cratinus' blanket: a κῶδιον is a blanket made out of fleece. He is mocking Cratinus for being an incontinent drunkard. Cratinus himself was also a poet of Old Comedy, older than Aristophanes, one of the best. "May I be," he says, "a κῶδιον in house of Cratinus, so that he can urinate on me, if I don't hate you." I believe that this really irritated Cratinus: even though he had retired from comic competition, he came back to write the drama *Wine-Flask*, in which he used the same arrangement and staged himself as a drunk. In the play, Comedy was Cratinus' wife, and she wanted to get a divorce from him on the basis of abuse.

Surely what "irritated" (παροξυνθεῖς) Cratinus was not this throwaway line, but the fact that between this insult and the longer one in the parabasis, *Knights* seems to make a project of depicting Cratinus as a senile drunkard whose glory days of writing comedies were so long past that the rest of Athens had forgotten about his existence. The most interesting part of this testimonium is the scholiast's assertion that in his comic rebuttal, Cratinus "used the same arrangement" (οἰκονομία τε κεχρημένον τοιαύτη) Aristophanes had used to attack him in *Knights*. The idea that Cratinus was a drunk may have originally been Aristophanes' invention, but Cratinus then developed a variation on it for his own purposes. As Zachary Biles eloquently puts it, "A rival was forced to witness his material being pirated and recast to his own disadvantage, while the perpetrator proclaimed his own comic genius in the process."³³

Cratinus retook control over his own drunken persona in *Wine-Flask*, borrowing the image at the center of Aristophanes' mockery and making it the heart of his rebuttal. In *Wine-Flask*, Cratinus put his own persona on the stage as a comic hero whose wife, Comedy, is fed up with his alcoholism and decides

32 The scholiast seems to have made a mistake here: Cratinus was *not* in fact in retirement in 424, and in fact came in second that year with *Satyrs*; see Ruffell (2002) 143. Despite the scholiast's mistake on this fairly basic point, most scholars feel his testimonium on the plot of *Wine-Flask* is still reliable.

33 Biles (2002) 198.

to leave him. The fragments show that the terms Comedy used were the legal vocabulary of divorce, so Cratinus was depicting the threat of an official break between himself and his genre. She complains of several offenses, including infidelity, saying Cratinus now prefers to chase after young wines (οἶνισκον replacing the expected νεάνισκον—fr. 195–6); Cratinus may have been picking up on Aristophanes' mockery of his adulterous appearance in *Acharnians*. A chorus of Cratinus' friends attempted to convince Comedy to stay with her wayward husband. Apparently they were successful and a reconciliation followed, although it is unclear whether the chorus and Comedy joined forces in getting Cratinus to curb his consumption of wine, or, more likely, Cratinus managed to convince his wife that drunkenness was not a hindrance to his playwriting, but actually a source of inspiration.³⁴

Cratinus outmaneuvered Aristophanes by taking the younger comedian's criticisms and detoxifying them. Perhaps the most galling part of this rebuttal for Aristophanes (or at least his "Aristophanes" persona) is that Cratinus managed to rebut the criticisms of *Knights* without even explicitly mentioning that he was doing so, although a scholion on *Knights* 531 does claim that somewhere in *Wine-Flask* Cratinus accused Aristophanes of plagiarizing Eupolis.³⁵ In *Wine-Flask*, Cratinus defends and reaffirms his poetic self-representation in the clearest, least ambiguous manner imaginable: he literally stages a debate that his persona wins. Comedy and her husband Cratinus argue about whether wine hurts or helps their relationship, and when Cratinus-the-character wins within the play, Cratinus-the-poet implies in a broader sense that his metapoetic claims to inspiration and genius have been confirmed. Additionally, as a playwright probably could not have predicted with any certainty, the success of Cratinus-the-character within the play is paralleled by the success that Cratinus-the-poet achieved through the victory of *Wine-Flask* in the contest that year; in the plot a personification of Comedy approves of his wine-soaked poetics, and outside the world of the play the citizens of Athens appear to have agreed.

The fallout from *Wine-Flask* was substantial, and although it is impossible to prove that Cratinus' defensive strategy in *Wine-Flask* was completely unprecedented, it is unlikely the play would have generated as much of a dramatic response as it did if Cratinus had simply reused a common trope.

34 Rosen (2000) 32–3.

35 ταῦτα ἀκούσας ὁ Κρατῖνος ἔγραψε τὴν Πυτίνην, δεικνὺς ὅτι οὐκ ἐλήρησεν, ἐν ᾗ κακῶς λέγει τὸν Ἀριστοφάνην ὡς τὰ Εὐπόλιδος λέγοντα ("Hearing this, Cratinus wrote *Wine-Flask* to show that he wasn't a babbler, a play in which he insults Aristophanes for plagiarizing the words of Eupolis"). For this specific accusation of plagiarism, see Sidwell (1993).

Aristophanes' immediate reaction is visible in *Wasps*, one of two comedies he produced in the Lenaia of 422. In *Wasps*, Aristophanes takes the basic plot arc and many of the themes of *Wine-Flask* and reuses them without mentioning Cratinus or *Wine-Flask* by name.³⁶ He is more explicit in the revised parabasis of *Clouds*, the comedy that originally lost to *Wine-Flask*. In the rewritten version of the play, Aristophanes' persona expresses extreme annoyance at the audience's lack of good taste in preferring Cratinus' contribution over his own.³⁷ He claims that although *Clouds* was the "cleverest of his comedies" (ταύτην σοφώτατ' . . . τῶν ἐμῶν κωμῳδίων—line 522) he had been "defeated by vulgar men even though he deserved to win" (ὑπ' ἀνδρῶν φορτικῶν / ἡττηθεὶς οὐκ ἄξιός ὢν, lines 524–5). Cratinus is not mentioned by name, but he is dismissed as being φορτικός, common and coarse, a foil for Aristophanes' more intelligent comedy.

Eupolis also reused Cratinus' *Wine-Flask* strategy in his *Autolycus*, staged only a few years later in 420. Eupolis consistently represented himself as a teacher of the polis, a fairly common stance for a comedian but one that Eupolis adopted with particular zest by telling the audience that although they had been dismissed from class a long time ago, he was summoning them back and telling them to bring their writing tablets along to take notes (fr. 192).³⁸ Just as Aristophanes contributed his own variation on Cratinus' poetics of Dionysiac inspiration by depicting him as an aging drunkard, he used a similar tactic against Eupolis, manipulating his competitor's didactic persona and portraying him as not an educator, but the kind of creep who lurks around wrestling schools hoping to catch a glimpse of naked prepubescent boys

36 As Rosen points out, Aristophanes could have retaliated with a comedy in which his persona "Aristophanes" defended his poetics more explicitly, but chose not to do so (Rosen (2000) 25). Such an obvious imitation of Cratinus' successful strategy could have backfired on Aristophanes; even if he managed to retake control over his own persona and prove that he was more than a sophist and a quack, he would still have implicitly confirmed Cratinus' brilliance. Instead of attacking Cratinus explicitly, the *Wasps* presents itself as a comeback play by mirroring the plot of *Wine-Flask* in many ways; see Biles (2002) 189–98.

37 On the challenges of reconstructing the original and revised *Clouds*, see Dover (1968) lxxx–xcviii; Hubbard (1986); and Tarrant (1991). Tarrant argues that it was the first *Clouds* that would have influenced Plato and Xenophon, because the revised version was never staged. Reckford argues that the scholiast exaggerates and "the play we have is mostly identical with the play performed in 423 BC," although his is a minority viewpoint (Reckford (1987) 394).

38 Bakola (2008) 22–3.

(*Wasps* 1023–5, *Peace* 762–3).³⁹ In his quest to retake control over his persona, Eupolis seems to have looked toward Cratinus' success as an example.⁴⁰ The main character of *Autolycus* is a young wrestling student who looks for advice to a wise teacher named Eupolis. The entire interaction is almost identical to the one between Aristophanes and Cratinus only a few years earlier.

Even considering how little remains of the works of Cratinus and Eupolis, it is clear that the competitive interactions between Aristophanes and his rivals comprised a complex set of strategies for subverting and manipulating each other's self-representations. Although Aristophanes was not as dominant as he claimed to be, he had significant influence not only on his audience but on the brands of his competitors. To return briefly to Thucydides, perhaps the lack of monumental construction in Sparta should be viewed as a branding strategy to position the physical appearance of the city in opposition to Athens. Brand construction is far from a unilateral undertaking; it often involves input and influence from multiple sources, including the creator, the consumer, and the critic.

“The Smuggest Old Black Man Public Persona”

Recent studies of Aristophanes, Cratinus, and Eupolis are comprehensive, insightful, and thorough when describing the mechanics of persona manipulation and explaining how comic relationships worked and functioned. But the “how” of these rivalries can be easier to quantify than the “why.” Why is there such an urgency to how the comedians defended their own personas? What was at stake for them if they lost control over their self-representation? When Aristophanes claimed that Cratinus had gone so long without a victory that his wreaths had dried up (*Knights* 534), and Cratinus responded by using the criticism as the basis for *Wine-Flask*, what drove him to respond?

39 *Wasps* 1023–5: ἀρθείς δὲ μέγας καὶ τιμηθεὶς ὡς οὐδεὶς πώποτ' ἐν ὑμῖν, / οὐκ ἔκτελέσαι † φησὶν ἐπαρθείς οὐδ' ὀγκῶσαι τὸ φρόνημα, / οὐδὲ παλαίστρας περικωμάζειν πειρών (“although he has been lifted up and honored by you like no other poet, he says that he has not achieved his goal and hasn't let it go to his head, nor does he hang around wrestling schools to make passes”); *Peace* 762–3: καὶ γὰρ πρότερον πράξας κατὰ νοῦν οὐχὶ παλαίστρας περινοστών / παίδας ἐπέιρων (“I haven't let [my success] get to my head and been visiting wrestling schools and hitting on boys”). Both references to Eupolis imply that his success was somehow tied to the pederasty of his persona.

40 Bakola (2008) 20–6.

Part of that motivation may have come from affronted pride; and, considering that *Wine-Flask* won first prize, it seems that Cratinus also found Aristophanes' challenge to his persona creatively inspiring. And then, of course, there may have been some artistic annoyance at the loss of control over his image. It is possible that the stakes were small for Aristophanes and his competitors in these persona manipulations, and taking offense was an artificial stance meant to entertain the audience. But the consequences of persona manipulation could also have been both tangible and significant. The potential seriousness might not have been clear a decade ago, when many of these studies of persona manipulation were published—but they should certainly be clear now, after 2014 provided what might be the greatest moment in history of comic persona manipulation with tremendous consequences.

Comedians still have brands and personas with varying degrees of similarity to their offstage personalities; consider the entirely fictional “Stephen Colbert” character on *The Colbert Report*. Before 2014, the comedian Bill Cosby had a very particular kind of persona: the ultimate family man, everyone's suspended, old-fashioned, critical grandfather. It was an intentional creation in his part, utilizing the slippage between “Bill Cosby” and his “Cliff Huxtable” character on *The Cosby Show*. The potential for that confusion was built into the very title of the show, which pointed toward the name of the show's main actor rather than any of its characters. In a sense, the dynamic is not dissimilar from Aristophanes' characterization of Dicaeopolis in *Acharnians*. Dicaeopolis' name seems to connect him to Eupolis, to the extent that some scholars speculate that Eupolis and Aristophanes may have written *Acharnians* in collaboration.⁴¹ However, Aristophanes also assigns Dicaeopolis a biographical detail from his own life, the threat of prosecution by Cleon (*Acharnians* 377–8, 502–3). In doing so, like Cosby, Aristophanes intentionally confounds the boundaries between character and comedian.⁴² Unfortunately and disturbingly, it seems Cosby did not only utilize this confusion in his standup comedy; many women who allege they were sexually assaulted by Cosby claim that he took advantage of his grandfatherly persona to silence them, convincing them that his persona meant they would never be believed.⁴³

There were rumors about Cosby for years, but no consequences—until an up-and-coming younger comedian, Hannibal Buress, incorporated a few jokes about Cosby into his stand-up routine:

41 On this debate, see Bowie (1982); Sutton (1988); Olson (1990); and Sidwell (1995) 63.

42 Goldhill positions the relationship as a tension-filled resonance rather than an easy correspondence (Goldhill (1991) 189–94).

43 Malone (2015).

And it's even worse because Bill Cosby has the fucking smuggest old black man public persona that I hate. "Pull your pants up, black people. I was on TV in the eighties. I can talk down to you because I had a successful sitcom." Yeah, but you raped women, Bill Cosby. So, brings you down a couple notches. "I don't curse onstage." Well, yeah, you're a rapist, so, I'll take you sayin' lots of "motherfuckers" on *Bill Cosby: Himself* if you weren't a rapist . . . I want to just at least make it weird for you to watch Cosby Show reruns . . . I've done this bit on stage, and people don't believe. People think I'm making it up . . . That shit is upsetting. If you didn't know about it, trust me. You leave here and Google "Bill Cosby rape." It's not funny. That shit has more results than Hannibal Buress.

Buress' particular point of contention is Cosby's "public persona." Like Aristophanes, Cratinus, and Eupolis, Buress undermines and reroutes a fellow comedian's brand: instead of being a hypercritical grandfather, Cosby becomes a hypocritical rapist. These similarities are instructive (especially since Aristophanes mocked Eupolis for being a pederast, an accusation not far different in spirit from Buress' attack on Cosby). Although the differences between comedy in classical Athens and today are significant, the interaction between Buress and Cosby can help illuminate the urgency behind the persona manipulations of Aristophanes and his competitors.

We can only guess why a younger comedian's jokes about Cosby finally brought what had been whispers about the older comedian into the mainstream public discourse. But the fact that it took stand-up comedy to bring awareness of Cosby's crimes into the open suggests that persona struggles between comedians could have much higher stakes than scholars had previously believed. For Cosby, at least, the consequences have been staggering. Although Buress mentioned thirteen women who had made allegations, as of this writing more than fifty women have come forward. On December 30, 2015, three charges of aggravated indecent assault were brought against Cosby in the state of Pennsylvania. Even if he is acquitted, his legacy is eternally tarnished. As Buress wanted, people now feel far more than "weird" about watching reruns of the Cosby Show.⁴⁴ At the very least, he has made it

44 The comedian Amy Schumer made a similar joke a few months later on *Inside Amy Schumer*, staging a mock trial of Bill Cosby in the court of public opinion. The defense argues, "If convicted, the next time you put on a rerun of *The Cosby Show*, you may wince a little. Might feel a little pang. And none of us deserve that. We don't deserve to feel that pang."

unlikely in the extreme that there will ever be a eulogistic volume of scholarly research into the reception of William H. Cosby, Jr.

“An Over-subtle, Idea-chasing Euripidaristophanizer”

In fifth-century Athens, the dialectical construction of public personas was not a phenomenon that only existed between comedians within the confines of Old Comedy. Persona manipulation between comedians is the easiest to address methodologically: both sides have identical intertextual tools at their disposal to respond to each other’s mockery and challenges. It is far more difficult to pin down how Aristophanes’ other targets responded to and absorbed his characterizations to create their own brands. However, there is evidence that Aristophanes had a significant impact on shaping the public personas of some of his targets, especially Socrates and Euripides.

I have already mentioned that, in Plato’s *Apology*, Socrates claims that those listening to him have a false impression of who he is because they see him as identical to the character “Socrates” in Aristophanes’ *Clouds*. But this phenomenon is even more apparent in Aristophanes’ mockery of Euripides, who was perhaps his single favorite target. Every extant comedy of Aristophanes from Euripides’ lifetime mocks him except *Birds*, and even that play—along with the two other Aristophanic comedies produced after Euripides’ death that do not mention him, *Ecclesiazusae* and *Wealth*—still contains unattributed quotations from and references to Euripides’ tragedies. Euripides appears onstage as a character in three of Aristophanes’ extant comedies, as well as at least two lost ones, *Prologue* and *Dramas*. Aristophanes’ lost *Phoenissae* and *Lemniae* were most likely parodies of the Euripidean plays from which they took their titles.⁴⁵

This obsession with Euripides quickly became part of Aristophanes’ comic brand.⁴⁶ Perhaps as early as *Wine-Flask*, only a few years after the beginning of Aristophanes’ career, Cratinus coined the term “Euripidaristophanizer,”

45 Euripides’ presence in Aristophanes’ *Prologue* and *Dramas* is attested by a scholion on *Wasps* 61c, explaining why Xanthias need to clarify that here was one play in which Aristophanes did not mock Euripides.

46 Bakola points out that the same key terms are used by Aristophanes to characterize his own poetics and that of Euripides, including *δεξιότης* (“cleverness”), *καινότης* (“originality”), and *σοφία* (“wisdom”). She concludes that “Euripides plays a fundamental role in Aristophanic self-presentation” (Bakola (2008) 10). See also Storey (1998) 125.

showing that there was already some degree of identification between the comedian and the tragedian (fr. 342):⁴⁷

τίς δὲ σύ; κομψός τις ἔροιτο θεατῆς
 ὑπολεπτολόγος, γνωμιδιώκτης, εὐριπιδαριστοφανίζων.

And who are you? Some clever spectator might ask,
 An over-subtle, idea-chasing Euripidaristophanizer.

Although the valence of this insult and its intended object are much-debated, Cratinus was clearly characterizing the type of poetry both Euripides and Aristophanes wrote as being outwardly clever and sophisticated but essentially without substance, in contrast to his own poetics of Dionysiac inspiration.⁴⁸ Nor is this famous fragment the only instance of a comic rival criticizing Aristophanes for identifying too closely with Euripides. According to a scholion on the *Apology*, “Aristophanes’ comic rivals criticized him for mocking Euripides while imitating him at the same time, and he himself admits it in *Women Claiming Tent-Sites*” (Ἀριστοφάνης . . . ἐκωμῶδεῖτο δ’ ἐπὶ τῷ σκώπτειν μὲν Εὐριπίδην, μιμεῖσθαι δ’ αὐτόν . . . καὶ αὐτὸς δ’ ἐξομολογεῖται Σκηναῶς καταλαμβάνουσας).⁴⁹

Although Aristophanes’ comic rivals attempted to portray him as an over-intellectualizing sophist, Aristophanes’ frequent appropriation of Euripides’ tragedies seems to have been well-received by his audience. In response to his defeat by Cratinus’ *Wine-Flask*, in the Lenaia of 422 Aristophanes produced two comedies that competed against each other directly, *Wasps* and *Prologue*.⁵⁰ The former is a more explicitly political return to the mockery of Cleon that was so successful in *Knights*, while the latter featured an extensive parody of Euripides and the tragic προαγών.⁵¹ That these two competing comedies were meant to be seen as negative images of each other is suggested by how, in the prologue of *Wasps*, the slave Xanthias explicitly tells the audience that,

47 Luppe points out that, logistically speaking, this quote is quite likely to have come from *Wine-Flask*, since the overlap between the two comedians was relatively brief, and it makes more sense after the extended parody of Euripides in *Acharnians* (Luppe (2000) 19).

48 Bakola argues that this insult was part of a program on Cratinus’ part to depict Aristophanes and Euripides as overly sophisticated (Bakola (2008) 19–20).

49 Scholion Areth. (B) on Plato *Apology* 19c.

50 On this extremely strange occurrence, see Storey (2003b).

51 This is the usual reading of Σ *Wasps* 61c = *Prologue* test. iv: οὐ μόνον ἐν τούτῳ δράματι, ὡς εἴρηται, εἰσῆχται οὕτως Εὐριπίδης, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῷ Προαγῶνι καὶ ἐν τοῖς Ἀχαρνεύσιν.

for once, Aristophanes is not going to mock Euripides in this play (οὐδ' αὖθις ἀνασελγαινόμενος Εὐριπίδης ["nor is Euripides complained about again"]—line 61).

The defeat of *Wasps* by *Prologue* might suggest that the audience had not only come to expect Aristophanes to mock Euripides in many of his plays; they had come to enjoy it as well. The audience's enjoyment was a positive outcome for Aristophanes, and he did emerge victorious that year. But it also meant that as a result of his parodies, his work and Euripides' had become somewhat inextricable. This danger is always present in comedy: if a joke makes fun of a target too well, the comedian may find the audience comes to associate them with that particular target. Hannibal Buress ended his mockery of Bill Cosby by claiming that "Bill Cosby rape" had more Google results than "Hannibal Buress," suggesting that the whispered rumors about Cosby were better-known than Buress' entire career. He certainly did not expect that his stand-up set mocking Cosby would bring him the attention it has. It became so notorious, according to *GQ*, that Comedy Central chose to delay their announcement of Buress' new show "until Hannibal Buress' name was no longer associated with that sick fucker Bill Cosby's."⁵²

When Aristophanes put a tragedian onstage, as he so often did, he tended to characterize that tragedian as a physical embodiment of his poetics. This phenomenon is apparent in two places. In *Acharnians*, Dicaeopolis observes a correspondence between Euripides' appearance and his tragic style (*Acharnians* 410–3):

ἀναβάδην ποιεῖς,
ἔξδ' ὄν καταβάδην; οὐκ ἐτὸς χλωλὸς ποιεῖς.
ἀτὰρ τί τὰ ῥάκι' ἐκ τραγωδίας ἔχεις,
ἐσθῆτ' ἐλαινὴν; οὐκ ἐτὸς πτωχοὺς ποιεῖς.

You write with your feet propped up when you could stand? It's no wonder you write cripples. And why do you wear this pitiable garb, the rags from a tragedy? No wonder you write beggars.

Dicaeopolis, having seen Euripides with his own eyes, feels he now has insight into some of Euripides' poetic choices. A similar interaction occurs with the characterization of Agathon in *Thesmophoriazousae*: Agathon is depicted as overly feminine because of the delicacy and beauty of his poetry (lines 97–192). There are obvious similarities between this technique and insulting Cratinus

⁵² Brodesser-Akner (2015).

for being a drunk or Eupolis for being a pederast, since both use as the object of mockery a persona who is a distillation of the dramatist's poetics. The only difference is that Aristophanes had to create these personas for his tragedian targets, while his comic competitors played a role in constructing their personas.

Aristophanes had a number of jokes he repeatedly made about Euripides. Euripides had a characteristic tendency to stage ragged, crippled beggars (*Acharnians*, *Peace*, *Frogs*). His female characters are faithless and promiscuous (*Lysistrata*, *Thesmophoriazusae*, *Frogs*). He prayed to unusual gods, such as "the ether" (*Thesmophoriazusae*, *Frogs*). His characters were prone to engage in meaningless sophistry (*Clouds*, *Peace*)—particularly *Hippolytus* 612, "my tongue swore, but my mind remains unsworn" (*Thesmophoriazusae*, *Frogs*). And then there is one of Aristophanes' favorite and most obscure jokes: that Euripides was the son of a vegetable-seller (*Acharnians*, *Thesmophoriazusae*, *Frogs*). This joke has tormented scholiasts and scholars for centuries; since it seems almost impossible that Euripides truly came from a family of greengrocers, what precisely is Aristophanes making fun of?⁵³

Although we are uncertain how to decode and interpret some of these jokes, ancient biographers had fewer compunctions; they essentially took Aristophanes' mockery of Euripides as historical fact.⁵⁴ After all, Aristophanes was Euripides' contemporary, and he had better information than they did (or we do, for that matter). So they inscribed into Euripides' life story his pact with the women of Athens not to write about evil female characters anymore, his vegetable-selling mother, the infidelity of his two wives. The result is that "Euripides" the Aristophanic character became even more closely identified with the author of Euripides' tragedies. The received story of Euripides' life was an embodiment of the reception of Aristophanes' comedies. Few are so credulous now; even the idea that Euripides spent the end of his life in Macedonia has been doubted.⁵⁵ But Aristophanes' jokes have still shaped the discourse on Euripidean tragedy: would scholars truly be interested in whether Euripides was a misogynist or not if Aristophanes had not told so many jokes about his female characters' licentiousness?⁵⁶ Aside from perhaps Aristotle, Aristophanes might rank as the most influential critic in the long history of the reception of Euripides' tragedies.

53 Roselli (2005).

54 Lefkowitz (1978); (1981) 87–103; and (1984).

55 Scullion (2003).

56 March (1990).

It is unclear, however, when Aristophanes' comic commentary became so influential.⁵⁷ There are few outside sources to show whether Aristophanes' mockery had a significant impact on their contemporary audience. The preference of fourth-century comedians for making allusions to Euripides was almost certainly influenced by Aristophanes' depiction of the tragedian and should not be viewed as independent evidence.⁵⁸ Additionally, it can be unclear whether Aristophanes is *shaping* the audience's view of Euripides or reflecting and satirizing views that were already widely held. For example, in *Lysistrata* the male half-chorus declares that women are "hated by all the gods and by Euripides" (τασδι δὲ τὰς Εὐριπίδῃ θεοῖς τε πᾶσιν ἐχθράς—line 283) and that "there is no poet cleverer than Euripides: there truly is nothing more shameless than a woman" (οὐκ ἔστ' ἀνὴρ Εὐριπίδου σοφώτερος ποιητής· / οὐδὲν γὰρ ᾧδε θρέμμ' ἀναιδές ἐστιν ὡς γυναικες—lines 368–9).⁵⁹ *Thesmophoriazusae* then develops the idea in much greater detail.⁶⁰ But *Thesmophoriazusae* also appropriates heavily from Euripidean plays with unobjectionable heroines, such as *Helen* and *Andromeda*, undermining the women's claim within the play that Euripides intentionally seeks out myths with evil female characters but "has never written a Penelope, because she was known for being virtuous" (Πηνελόπην δὲ / οὐπώποτ' ἐποίησ', ὅτι γυνή σῶφρων ἔδοξεν εἶναι—lines 547–8). There is a similar irony in Aristophanes' depiction of Euripides in *Thesmophoriazusae* and *Frogs* as someone whose philosophy is barely intelligible, yet nevertheless appeals greatly to the uneducated and unsophisticated masses. Aristophanes could be mocking Euripides, or his target could be the distorted view the Athenian audience has of Euripides—a view that he himself helped to shape.

Some scholars believe that Aristophanes' mockery had a negative impact on how Euripides' tragedies were perceived by his audience.⁶¹ However, it is unclear that Euripides suffered any loss in status or prestige on account of being a frequent target of Aristophanes' appropriation. Indeed, it seems the opposite was true: Aristophanes' choice to repeatedly and extensively

57 For more on Aristophanes' reception in antiquity, see Slater in this volume.

58 Scafuro (2014) 199–202.

59 Henderson (1987) *ad loc.* argues that these statements are the men's interpretation of Euripides, not a quotation.

60 See Sommerstein (1977) on the relative dating of *Lysistrata* and *Thesmophoriazusae* to the Lenaia and Great Dionysia of 411 respectively.

61 Revermann contrasts paraepic comedy and paratragedy on this basis: "While paratragedy is an especially aggressive version of comedy's parasitic way of generic appropriation in general, the paraepic mode, albeit still parasitic in nature, seeks not to devalue the object of appropriation and, in a zero-sum game situation, profit from its alleged failures and deficiencies (as is the case with paratragedy)" (Revermann (2013) 105–6).

appropriate and parody Euripides' texts was a legitimization of Euripides' status as an important tragedian.⁶² It is unlikely that Aristophanes "devalued" Euripides; the fact that *Frogs* positions Euripides as a possible (albeit ultimately unsuccessful) competitor of Aeschylus, whose status as a classic had already been established, suggests that as Aristophanes' favorite target Euripides had suffered no loss of prestige.

Considering Aristophanes' influence on history's view of Euripides and his likely influence on their shared audience's view of Euripides, one question remains: did Aristophanes have an impact on Euripides' view of Euripides? Did he help shape Euripides' tragic brand as he did the comic brands of Cratinus and Eupolis? Although some Euripidean scholars are skeptical,⁶³ an increasing number of studies argue that Aristophanes had a significant impact on Euripides' later works.⁶⁴ Although the precise nature of Euripides' responses to Aristophanes is the subject of much debate, it seems unlikely that he had no response at all. As we have seen, comic jokes were often taken very seriously by the targets of their mockery, especially in their ability to shape public perception of an individual's key characteristics. Our understanding of what constitutes "Euripidean tragedy" is to a great extent a product of Aristophanes' jokes. So when Euripides' plays written after the production of the *Acharnians* in 425 BC appear especially "Euripidean," such as the *Orestes*, we must ask ourselves: whose definition of "Euripidean" are we using?⁶⁵

Comedy is the eternal underdog genre. Aristophanes protested at *Acharnians* 500 that "'tragedy' also knows what is just" (τὸ γὰρ δίκαιον οἶδε καὶ τρυγῶδία), implying most people believed the opposite to be the case.⁶⁶ Similarly, E.B. White wrote in 1941, "The world likes humor, but it treats it patronizingly. It decorates its serious artists with laurel, and its wags with Brussels sprouts. It feels that if a thing is funny it can be presumed to be something less than great . . ." ⁶⁷ This debate arose once more in 2015 when *The Atlantic* published an article called "How Comedians Became Public Intellectuals," which immediately

62 Rosen argues that paratragedy played a crucial role in cementing the status of tragedians as classics. He poses the question: "If there were no Aristophanes, would Euripides (for example) have become the 'classic' that he eventually did?" (Rosen (2006) 28).

63 Due, in large part, to the well-deserved influence of Taplin, who argued that "to a considerable degree fifth-century tragedy and comedy help to define each other by their opposition and their reluctance to overlap" (Taplin (1986) 164).

64 See, for instance, Sutton (1976); Scharffenberger (1995) and (1996); Kirkpatrick and Dunn (2002); Mendelsohn (2009) and (2014); and Zuckerberg (2014).

65 Zeitlin (1980).

66 On this odd coinage, see Taplin (1983).

67 White (1941) 304.

garnered a response from the *New Republic* entitled “Comedians Are Funny, Not Public Intellectuals”—as though the two were mutually exclusive.⁶⁸

But no matter how much respect comedy receives (or even deserves) its impact on public opinion is undeniable. Both in classical Athens and today, comedy has a surprising ability to use brash and unsubtle humor to influence public opinion in very subtle ways. It need not change how people vote, or destroy the careers of the people it mocks. Comedy has a way of shaping the public discourse, of revealing the most incongruous or hypocritical or absurd elements of a public figure’s self-presentation—and then smashing them to pieces. A public persona is a crucial tool for anybody who seeks an audience, be they poets, philosophers, or politicians. And none were safe from Aristophanes, whose mockery colored twenty-four hundred years of reception of Athenian poetry, philosophy, and history.

68 Garber (2015) and Bruenig (2015).

PART 2

*Outreach: Adaptations, Translations,
Scholarship, and Performances*



Aristophanes in Early-Modern Fragments: Le Loyer's *La Néphélocugie* (1579) and Racine's *Les Plaideurs* (1668)

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Although Aristophanes was well known, in name at least, from the Renaissance onward, his work did not enjoy a very active reception in France before the very end of the eighteenth century. The sidelining of Aristophanic Old Comedy, with its bawdy and political *ad hominem* attacks, is easily accounted for by the triumph of a competing model. New Comedy, instantiated by the plays of Terence and Plautus, was used by theoreticians and practitioners alike to redefine comedy in France after the demise of medieval farce. Its predominance remained remarkably constant in theory and practice from Sebillet's *Art poétique françois* (1548) and Jodelle's *Eugène* (1553), to d'Aubignac's *La Pratique du Théâtre* (1657) and Molière's *L'Avare* (1668). Half-way through the seventeenth century, tragic playwrights such as Corneille and Racine turned to Greek models—in particular Sophocles and Euripides—to redefine neoclassical tragedy in opposition to tragicomedy and earlier Seneca-inspired plays. There was, however, no shift of this kind for comedy, and Aristophanes' influence remained all but negligible. Throughout the period, only two extant comedies, written at an interval of ninety years, took the plays of Aristophanes as sources of inspiration: Le Loyer's *La Néphélocugie* (1579) and Racine's *Les Plaideurs* (1668). Nothing could be more different than the circumstances and times in which the two plays were composed, their dramatic structure, or their tone. On the face of it, the only common factor between the two texts is that they were written by Hellenists who decided to draw their inspiration from Aristophanes' *Birds* (Le Loyer) and *Wasps* (Racine). Yet, drawn into sharp relief by the differences between the plays, there is a commonality of technique. Neither play can be considered a translation, but in each case, translated fragments of the ancient play were fitted in the new. In other words, translated old material was broken up and interspersed with new plot twists and topical references, so that in both cases Aristophanes' text is much more than a general source of inspiration; it is a definite presence. This chapter first endeavors to compare Le Loyer's and Racine's attitude towards Aristophanes as it is expressed in the forewords to their plays, before exploring this fragmented reception at work first in Le Loyer's *La Nephelococugie* and then in Racine's *Les Plaideurs*.

Fragmented Reception: Le Loyer's and Racine's Handling of Aristophanes

In his foreword "to the erudite and benevolent reader" (*Au Docte et Benevole Lecteur*), Le Loyer proudly placed his endeavor under the aegis of Orpheus, "bringing Old Comedy as though back from the tomb, and trying to have her live again among the French" (*Ramenant comme du Tombeau la vieille Comedie et essayant de la faire revivre entre les François*).¹ He justified the mixture of "sweet wantonness" (*gentillesses lascives*) and "grave erudition" (*choses serieuses et doctes*)² that can be found in his play through imitation:

J'ay imité en cecy un Poëte Grec, qui a traité peu s'en faut pareil argument au mien. Le Grec que je dis c'est Aristophane Comique, les Escripitz duquel te sont assez connuz, veu le pris qu'on en faict et le degré où ilz sont colloquez.

In this I have imitated a Greek poet who very nearly handled the same argument as I did. The Greek I talk of is the Comic Aristophanes, whose writings you know well, seeing how prized he is and how highly he is placed.³

He goes on to add, however, that he did not bring back his old Eurydice whole. He selected the good bits, "cutting and discarding the corrupted parts" (*en coupant et trenchant ce qu'elle avoit de vitieux*).⁴

Racine's strategy in his foreword to the reader (*Au lecteur*) is radically different. Talking about imitation would imply that Aristophanes is a model, and Racine chose to deny him that status. He claimed instead that he had only translated some of Aristophanes' witticisms,⁵ adding that he would have gladly chosen Terence or Menander as a source of inspiration, had he not been persuaded by friends to present "a sample of Aristophanes":⁶

Mon inclination ne me porterait pas à le prendre pour modèle si j'avais à faire une comédie... la régularité de Ménandre et de Térence me

1 Le Loyer (2004) 78. All translations in this chapter are my own.

2 Le Loyer (2004) 71.

3 Le Loyer (2004) 71.

4 Le Loyer (2004) 78.

5 Racine (2006) 35.

6 Racine (2006) 33.

semblait bien plus glorieuse et même plus agréable à imiter, que la liberté de Plaute et d'Aristophane... mais enfin je traduis Aristophane et l'on doit se souvenir qu'il avait affaire à des Spectateurs assez difficiles. Les Athéniens savaient apparemment ce que c'était que le sel attique, et ils étaient sûrs quand ils avaient ri de quelque chose qu'ils n'avaient pas ri d'une sottise.

My inclination would not have been to choose him [Aristophanes] as my model if I had a comedy to write... imitating the rule-abiding Menander and Terence seemed to me far more reputable and agreeable even, than the license of Plautus and Aristophanes... but I am translating Aristophanes, and it is worth remembering that his Spectators were hard to please. Athenians must have known what the Attic salt was, and when they had laughed at something they were certain that they had not laughed at nonsense.⁷

Calling his play a translation rather than an imitation was a way for Racine to avoid positioning himself as the Aristophanes of his day and age. Instead, he cunningly presented his comedy as an experiment conducted to see whether the Parisian audience of his time was as witty as Aristophanes' fellow Athenians. Whereas Le Loyer called his play an "imitation" and thus placed it under the authority of the Aristophanic model, Racine distanced himself from the unorthodox ancient playwright, and described his comedy primarily as an attempt to translate Aristophanes' jokes.

Both imitation and translation are notions that Le Loyer and Racine inherited from Humanists' interactions with ancient texts during the Renaissance. In France, the rediscovery of ancient literature gave rise to a number of literary quarrels, from Le Loyer's mid-sixteenth century to Racine's late seventeenth century, debating whether new authors writing in modern languages would ever successfully emulate the splendor of ancient literature. The question was first answered in the affirmative in the case of the French language by the *Pléiade*, an association of nine like-minded Hellenists, poets and playwrights, counting Ronsard, du Bellay, and Jodelle in their ranks, and who were Le Loyer's contemporaries and friends. In the 1549 manifesto of the *Pléiade* movement, *Défense et illustration de la langue française* (*Defense and Illustration of the French Language*), du Bellay summarized Humanist theories of imitation and translation, and defined the core difference between imitation and

7 Racine (2006) 34–5.

translation with the help of Quintilian's categories of rhetoric.⁸ At the heart of eloquence, there is *inventio*, finding what to write, and then *elocutio*, finding how to write it. If imitation entails finding new *elocutio* to fit ancient *inventio*, translation has the thankless task of preserving both *inventio* and *elocutio*, handling the same material in exactly the same way, without the freedom of reformulation. This clearly defines translation and imitation as opposites. Yet, later in the *Défense et illustration de la langue française*, du Bellay reminds fellow authors that they should only ever imitate works written in other languages. Imitation's only goal is to enrich the vernacular; imitating works written in French would mean trying to endow the French language with what already belonged to it.⁹ This literary patriotism adds a necessarily trans-linguistic dimension to imitation, of which Le Loyer shows himself to be keenly aware in 1579, when he presented his imitation of Aristophanes as an attempt to "serve you [reader] and serve France, to whom I ought to give back however little erudition I have, as a faithful debtor; I pay her back, and will as long as I have life."¹⁰ Translation and imitation are thus both opposite and complementary concepts.

The term "imitation," however, has long faded out of contemporary terminologies. The word now most often used in relation and opposition to translation is "adaptation." The change is a telling one. Imitation, as Racine stated very clearly in his foreword, presupposes a model; its ideal is to create a literary analogy whereby the new work reaches a similar level of excellence as the imitated work, while the new author achieves a similar status as the imitated author. An adaptation, however, presupposes that the text as it is does not fit a particular audience or medium, and adapting is the process that will give it what it lacks for its reception to be a successful one. An imitator aspires at sameness; an adapter's aim is to make changes. The technique and even the result of adaptation and imitation may be comparable (the task is after all to keep some and change some), but the implied hierarchy between old and new is reversed.

In the case at hand, both early-modern and contemporary terminologies would be misleading. Le Loyer's and Racine's strategic presentation of their plays as, respectively, an imitation and a translation in no way reflects how much or how little they have altered the Aristophanic source-text. According to modern philological standards, neither is a translation; but *La Néphélococie*,

8 Du Bellay (1930) 51. For an analysis of Humanist imitation and translation theory, see Cave (1979).

9 Du Bellay (1930) 59.

10 Le Loyer (2004) 78.

presented as an imitation by its author, has a greater claim to the label translation than *Les Plaideurs*, despite Racine's contention that he translated Aristophanes. Yet, in both plays, some passages undeniably are translation-like reworkings of the ancient text. Reception of an ancient text could be seen, following Le Loyer's cue, as a trick of literary necromancy—an author raises an old text from the dead by giving it new words. Many terms are used to describe or advertise a certain degree of proximity or distance between the ancient work and the new: imitation, adaptation or translation, but also version, re-working, or even looser phrases like “after” or “inspired by.” However, in order to understand what kind of reception is at work here, it may be more telling to focus on the technique, rather than try to label the result. Beyond the opposite strategies presiding to their forewords, what Le Loyer and Racine describe in each case is a process of fragmentation; they have selected scenes and cut offending parts. Presenting the result as somewhere between translation (close to the source text) and imitation or adaptation (further away from the source text) would hint at a stable relation, implying the same degree of either freedom or faithfulness throughout the work. What is immediately striking for these two plays is that such homogeneity does not exist. Some passages closely translate the Aristophanic source-text while others introduce entirely new material. The source-play is broken up, new bits fitted in the gaps, with some parts of the original left out altogether, and others diverted from their original use. Not unlike the “grain of wheat” in the Gospel of John (12:20–33), the ancient plays gave new textual life through a process of dissolution; they had to “die,” or rather be opened up, for a new work to emerge. *Les Plaideurs* and *La Néphélocugie* exemplify this fragmentation process in two very different ways.

Le Loyer chose to follow the pattern of Old Comedy, explaining in his preface that, at the time of Aristophanes, plays were not divided into scenes but followed a rhythmic pattern of “choruses, parabases, epirrhemata.” In a second foreword entitled “To the same reader, a note of warning” (*Au même lecteur; avertissement*) and presumably written after the play had circulated for a time, he forcefully stood by his choice of actually labelling his character's speeches “parabasis,” “strophe,” or “epirrhemata,” and refusing to use the usual scene system, even as he pointed out that some of his readers derided him behind his back for doing so.¹¹ Le Loyer thus preserved the composition of *Birds* and reflected its metric complexity by the use of mixed meter. The plot, however, he subtly but radically altered. His birds are not any birds but “cocus,” which in sixteenth-century French could still mean either the breed of birds (in modern

11 Le Loyer (2004) 75.

French *coucou*) or betrayed husbands. At the start of Le Loyer's play, two old men fly from unfaithful wives to find peace in the more congenial realm of cuckoos / cuckolds.

Racine, on the contrary, preserved exactly the main plot of Aristophanes' *Wasps* up to line 1008. A son tries to convince his father to put a stop to the old man's passion for passing sentences, and then organizes a domestic trial as a substitute for real public ones. Yet, just as he preserved the plot, Racine gave his play an un-Aristophanic three-act structure and an added love subplot, since the son of the demented judge is in love with the daughter of a rabidly litigious neighbor. The judicial theme merges Old Comedy material and New Comedy narrative in order to fulfill the generic expectations of seventeenth-century audiences. In each case, beyond changes in structure or plot, a number of ancient fragments can be clearly delineated, even as they are given new meaning and new dramatic function.

Fragments and fragmentation bring to mind through association the idea of a collision between an ancient text and new tastes, as the ancient text resonates with other more recent textual traditions. Le Loyer's and Racine's plays have one of these modern references in common. The later part of Rabelais' oeuvre, *The Third Book* (Tiers livre, 1546), *The Fourth Book* (Quart livre, 1548), and *The Fifth Book* (Cinquième livre, 1554), are used by both authors as a linguistic and imaginative medium allowing them to handle Aristophanes' highly sexualized and satirical sense of the burlesque. This is particularly prevalent in Le Loyer's *La Néphélocogie*, but Rabelais is also, and more surprisingly perhaps, present as one of the relays that Racine used to make sense of Aristophanes' *Wasps*.

Le Loyer's Farcical Utopia: To Resuscitate and To Redress

In 1579, Pierre Le Loyer, seigneur de la Brosse, published *La Comédie Néphélocogie, ou la Nuée des Cocus, non moins docte que facétieuse* in a volume comprising various poetic works.¹² Born in 1550, he studied the humanities for five years in Paris before leaving for Toulouse to take a course in law, possibly around 1570. He then went back to Paris, where his first two collections of poems and plays were published in 1576 and 1579, respectively. By 1584, he was a judge (*Conseiller*) at the Tribunal (*Présidial*) in Angers, where he lived until his death in 1634.¹³ Beside his legal career, he was also a prolific and

12 "Néphélocogie" is a French transcription of the name of the city built by the birds in Aristophanes' play, Νεφελοκοκκυγία. The spelling twist from "coccygie" to "cocugie" reflects Le Loyer's main transformation of the plot, in which birds become cuckoos/cuckolds.

13 Le Loyer (2004) 12.

eclectic humanist writer, a poet in his early years, and a specialist in demonology and biblical exegesis later in life. A formidable linguist, Le Loyer knew Hebrew, as well as Latin and ancient Greek.

La Néphélocogie was not his first foray into the writing of comedy. In *The Mute Fool* (*Le Muet insensé*, 1576), a lovelorn student solicits the help of a magician to seduce his ladylove with fair speeches. Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing whether either play was ever performed. In the preface to the *Néphélocogie*, Le Loyer states that he showed the manuscript to friends who persuaded him to publish “this comedy, or rather this pastime from my youth.”¹⁴ Since the publication in 1579 was a Parisian one, it seems probable that the friends mentioned here were Parisian acquaintances. Yet, in the play itself, the two main characters leave Toulouse behind, not Paris or Athens, to look for the city of cuckolds, so it would seem that the play was composed five to ten years before the date of its publication, during Le Loyer’s law studies in the South of France. Now, law students had been renowned since the thirteenth century for putting on shows. The *Basoche*, a playful abbreviation of the word *Basilique*, was the name given to guilds of clerks who organized festivals and staged indoor plays. They were banned by Henry III as late as 1582, a full decade after Le Loyer’s training as a clerk, so it is tempting to imagine that Le Loyer’s involvement with theater was not merely abstract. However, no records have been found proving that Le Loyer belonged to one of these guilds in Toulouse or elsewhere, and the *Néphélocogie* significantly differs in tone and subject matter from the morality plays favored by the Basochiens. So it is only a matter of conjecture, seeing the importance of acting in the guild, that an early version of the play may have been written and staged for an audience.¹⁵ Le Loyer may have composed a first, presumably terser, version of the play for the *théâtre de la Basoche*, since Le Loyer’s play, which is over 4000 lines long, is at least three times as long as Aristophanes’ *Birds*. Later in Paris, he would have had the leisure to add some of the pastiches and rhetorical *tours de force* that pepper the play. Performed or not, *La Néphélocogie* was, in any case, his only attempt at reviving an ancient play.

In his foreword, Le Loyer makes two parallel claims about the play. He starts confidently with the statement that its source of inspiration, Aristophanes, needs no introduction, since he is both well-known and highly thought of; and he ends with the boast that he is the first to try and bring the living form of Old Comedy back from the dead.¹⁶ The first statement rings slightly hollow in view of the dearth of translations and adaptations, but there is a trace of

14 Le Loyer (2004) 71.

15 Perret (1992) 26.

16 Le Loyer (2004) 71.

the *Pléiade*'s awareness of Aristophanic material, which may qualify Le Loyer's otherwise legitimate boast. A fragment corresponding to the first 264 lines of *Plutus* was first included in the complete works of Pierre Ronsard in the 1617 edition. Because of this late publication, it is difficult to date, and the rest of the play, if it was ever written, has not survived. It is surmised that Ronsard was given the task of imitating *Plutus* by Daurat, his Greek master and fellow member of the *Pléiade*.¹⁷ The extract shows that important changes to the plot were contemplated, but an Aristophanic fragment in French may indeed have predated *La Néphélococugie*.

First or not, Le Loyer's resurrection of Aristophanes is particularly striking for its attention to the dramatic and metrical structures of Old Comedy. As mentioned earlier, he kept in his text the technical names of the parts of Old Comedy as the 1484 Alde Manuce edition presented them, such as the parabasis, strophes, or the epirrhema, and he carefully preserved metrical patterns. Since French poetry follows syllabic patterns and rhymes, Le Loyer varied verse lengths and rhyming schemes to translate Aristophanes' poetry, choosing, for example, the decasyllable to translate the iambic trimeters of the dialogues, and Alexandrines (lines of 12 syllables) for the longer tetrameters in the two parabases. In the lyrical passages, he used shorter hexameters, heptameters, and octosyllables.¹⁸ The new metric system he created to reflect metric variety in his Greek model is a feature that Le Loyer took pains to comment on and justify in a preface entirely dedicated to that question.¹⁹ He obviously felt this aspect of his imitation was likely to be misunderstood. Lyrical homogeneity of meter was increasingly in favor with both poets and theoreticians of his time; plays wholly written in decasyllables or Alexandrines were preferred by the generation of the *Pléiade* to the mixed forms and shorter lines favored by the previous generation of poets, the *Rhétoriciens*.

Le Loyer does not exaggerate when he claims he has revived Old Comedy. Similarities between *Birds* and *La Néphélococugie* run deeper than meter. As Donald Perret showed in his analysis of the play, it is the agonistic structure of Old Comedy itself that Le Loyer preserved:

The old comic structure does not build toward a climax; its distinguishable feature is not the telos, but rather the agon or verbal contest...

¹⁷ Delcourt (1934) 3.

¹⁸ For a complete correspondence between Le Loyer's metric system and Aristophanes', see Le Loyer (2004) 297–305.

¹⁹ Le Loyer (2004) 79.

the question in the audience is never “how will it end?” but “what will come next?”²⁰

His play engages not only with Aristophanic characters and situations, but also with poetic and dramatic rhythms.

Yet if Le Loyer’s play revives Aristophanes so completely, how are we to understand his claim that he has cut and trimmed what was faulty in his model? The main elements of Aristophanic comedy that drew criticism from early-modern writers were the direct nominal attacks and the scurrility of his humor. In that they followed Plutarch, whose vision of Aristophanes is both recalled and deflected in Le Loyer’s foreword which calls for the authority of John Chrysostom, Cicero, and Plato to support Aristophanes’ cause. It is clear, however, that Le Loyer sets out to redress the virulent nature of Aristophanes’ satire. This he does quite effectively through his choice of play, since *Birds* is rather less topical and ribald than other extant comedies. Through his transformation of the birds into a flock of *cocus*, he further reduces the political dimension of *Birds* to the merely private concern of two elderly husbands. Aristophanes’ two main characters, Peisthetairos and Euelpides, leave Athens in a mock attempt to found a new colony. One of their main sources of discontent is Athenian litigiousness, and the city in the sky is clearly an anti-Athens. In the French play, Toulouse is simply a starting point, not the butt of satire, and the two characters, Genin and Cornard, leave because they are tired of being mocked and want to find other *cocus*. This switch from the political to the personal makes of *La Néphélocogie* a play about adultery, the stock comic situation of medieval farce and Greek New Comedy.

This avoidance of overt political implications is all the more interesting as Le Loyer published the play in 1579, in the midst of a decades-long religious civil war. In the foreword, the author endorses this choice of the “frivolous” (*folastre*) over the “grave” (*grave*), and Jacques Le Gras, his erudite friend whose laudatory sonnet features as one of the paratexts, praises him for the wisdom with which he has managed to avoid flattery without putting himself in danger. The sonnet associates wisdom with keeping one’s mouth shut, in what may be a play on and a reversal of the title of Le Loyer’s other comedy, *Le Muet insensé*. In this case, Le Loyer’s choice to remain silent about the troubles of his time is wisdom, not folly, and the only way of avoiding both flattery and danger.²¹ So however tempting it might have been to choose one of Aristophanes’ peace comedies in the context of what is sometimes called the

20 Perret (1992) 37.

21 Le Loyer (2004) 69.

seventh religious war of the period, some seven years after the Saint-Bathélemie massacre, the author explicitly and prudently stresses in the paratexts that he has chosen to gladden the hearts of his readers.²² Le Loyer's choice of *Birds* and his reticence concerning the troubled times in which he lived are reflected in his characters' escape away from human troubles. His two characters take the reader with them into a long Humanist exploration where farce and erudition rub shoulders.

The paradoxical consequence in terms of reception is that Le Loyer replaces social satire by adding a fresh layer of licentiousness to a play rather less scurrilous than other Aristophanic comedies. In so doing, he gives the reader a sense of the range of Aristophanic humor rather than a faithful reading of *Birds*. Le Loyer adds numerous sexual jokes about cuckolds to his play, inspired by a conscious borrowing of Rabelaisian stylistic and comic devices providing the reader with the licentiousness expected of Old Comedy, but safely centering it on the stock motif of cheated husbands. This playful pitting together of Aristophanes and Rabelais is highlighted by Le Loyer at the very beginning of his play. In Aristophanes' *Birds*, Euelpides and Peisthetairos each have a bird that they bought at the market as guides to lead them to the hoopoe. One is a crow, and the other a jackdaw. In Le Loyer's play, the two old cuckolds, Genin and Cornard, are on their own and very lost. One tells the other, as a joke, to go and ask a crow for directions:

Genin: See this crow who never stops crowing?
Ask him our way, if you want.
Cornard: Stop making fun of me.

Another guide is immediately chosen:

Genin : Voy ce Corbeau qui croasse sans fin,
Demande-luy si tu veuz, le chemin.
... En mon esprit un moyen m'est venu,
Dont j'apprendray ce chemin inconnu:
Divin flascon qui tiens la douce goutte,
Entre en ma bouche et m'asseure du doute,
De ces chemins incertains et divers!
... O le bon vin, le vin a une oreille!
Je sens desja que je diray merveille.

22 Le Loyer (2004) 83.

Genin: A means has come to my mind
 how to find the way we lost
 this holy flask holding sweet dew
 slide between my lips and dispel my doubts
 about the many uncertain ways
 ... Such good wine, it has an ear!
 I can already feel that I will say wonders.²³

Le Loyer jokes with his reader that the proper French guide is not a bird but the *dive bouteille* ("divine bottle"). This is a pointedly Rabelaisian joke, since "divine bottle" is the name of the oracle that Pantagruel and his friends, Panurge and Frère Jean, visit at the end of Rabelais' posthumous *Fifth Book*. Rabelais' divine bottle functions both as a farcical element and as an allegory. When Panurge is led by the prophetess Bacbuc to the oracle, the invocation itself takes the shape of a bottle; conversely, when he fails to understand the oracle, he is given a silver flask in the shape of a book to help him with his deciphering. Replacing Aristophanes' guiding birds by Rabelais' *dive bouteille* is a humorous way of placing his own play under the auspices of Rabelais' injunction "Trinch," drink at the source of erudition. It also makes the point that the text is a multi-layered act of imitation open to a wide range of intertextual references, and it prepares the way for Le Loyer's first fragmentation of Aristophanes' play. Shortly after Genin found his way in the oracular wine, he launches into a long speech explaining why he and Cornard have left Toulouse. The beginning of the passage closely mirrors Euelpides' direct address to the spectators (*Birds* 30), when Cornard asks Genin to tell "spectators who have long desired to hear it," what it is that ails them.²⁴ However, this is followed in Le Loyer's play by some 140 lines in which Genin elaborates on the fickle nature of women and the bitter fate of cuckolds.²⁵ The main source for the character's misogynistic vituperations is clearly Hesiodic (inspired by the creation of Pandora in *Theogony* 570–610 and *Works and Days* 59–105), but, as Doe and Cameron make amply clear in the preface to their 2004 edition of the play, the text resonates with Virgilian and Ovidian echoes: the sin of women is as deeply rooted as the elm in *Georgics* II.291–2 or the oak in *Aeneid* IV.445–6; the evils they are responsible for teem as ants on an anthill or bees on a flower (Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* I.93–6).²⁶ The erudition displayed here is highly tongue-in-cheek; the image of the powerfully rooted tree is at odds with the moral corruption it is meant to illustrate,

23 Le Loyer (2004) 84–6.

24 Le Loyer (2004) 87.

25 Le Loyer (2004) 87–94.

26 Le Loyer (2004) 19.

and the Ovidian quote reflects playfully on Genin's denunciation of womanly sins, since the same images were used by Ovid in *The Art of Love* precisely to describe the throng of available women who gather in theatres. Le Loyer's virtuoso approach to intertextuality explains how it is that while he followed the unfolding of the ancient play faithfully, his own comedy is over four thousand lines long to *Wasps*' 1537 lines, and despite its playful sophistication, the passage makes poor sense in strict dramatic terms. In a staging of the play, this long speech would mean that the two actors would have to either stand still or walk back and forth for a long general rant about female wantonness which advances neither plot nor character development. In marked contrast with the very beginning of the play, or the first encounter with Jean Cocu (the Tereus of *Birds*), this speech seems written for the erudite reader, rather than for the spectator. This could be interpreted as a hint that Le Loyer wrote different versions of his comedy: the first for performance, the second for the pleasure of the "Docte et b n vole Lecteur" to whom he addressed his play in the 1579 preface.

Genin's bombastic vituperation against women is an example of the source play bursting at the seams, to allow for non-Aristophanic fragments to be inserted in the interstices. Other passages are closely imitated from the source text but given new meaning. For instance, Le Loyer turns the first parabasis, whose rhetorical and dramatic function was unlikely to be familiar to readers or spectators, into an immediately recognizable satirical encomium redolent of Erasmus' *Praise of Folly* (1511). Le Loyer uses the theory of humors to justify the couple formed by the cold and lymphatic Jean Cocu and the hot-blooded crested quail (*Caille coiff e*). In the ancient myth, Tereus' wife was Procne, the nightingale, and in Aristophanes the part of the nightingale is played by a non-speaking flute player. Le Loyer, on the contrary, transforms the melodious nightingale into a *caille* (quail)—a word also used to designate prostitutes—and gives her both an important speaking part and a role in his cuckold allegory.²⁷ The quail sings the praise of prostitution, and her position is doubly fitting: not only because as her husband, Jean Cocu might indeed be considered as the king of cuckolds, but also because as the queen of cuckolds, she presents prostitution as an institution which protects old married men from adulterous young bucks who might otherwise have shown too much interest in their younger wives. Their civilizing influence is described as universal. Prostitutes rein in the folly of youth; they regulate the passions of young men and help control their appetites and the violence of their lust; but the sexual release they provide is also presented as having beneficial effects

27 The city of birds is often taken as an allegory. See Vickers (1997).

on the whole temperament, so that men eventually become less cruel in their dealings with both men and women.²⁸

Le Loyer thus turns the parabasis into a paradoxical praise of prostitution, and at the same time builds his farcical mythology, playing with bird names and their double meanings. In a world where men are cuckoos, women are quails. It is exactly such a world that is described at the end of the play, as soon as the Utopian *cit  des cocus* has been built. A herald describes the world as it was before “they (men) were getting by with no solace”;²⁹ war was taking its toll, Mars “in the fields piled up the bodies of men as food for crows.”³⁰ Corruption was everywhere:

Qui la vertu, qui le vice servoit,
 Qui tous les deux en mesme temps suivoit
 ... et ensemble de vice
 Et de vertu s'armoient en sa malice ...

Some served virtue, some vice
 Some followed both at the same time
 ... and armed themselves in their malignity with virtue and vice both ...³¹

Nothing could be more different now that the city *N ph locugie* is built:

La paix, l'amour et la sainte concorde
 Unist les coeurs qui estoient en discorde,
 ... chacun de meurs aux Cocus est semblable
 ... l'homme n'est plus jaloux de son espouse
 Et du mary n'est la femme jalouze
 ... les deux espoux pondent au nid d'autrui

Peace, love, and holy concord
 Unite all the hearts that were in discord
 ... Everyone's ways are similar to that of cuckolds/cuckoos
 ... man is no longer jealous of wife
 And wife no longer is jealous of husband
 ... the two spouses lay eggs in other nests.³²

28 Le Loyer (2004) 166–8.

29 Le Loyer (2004) 244.

30 Le Loyer (2004) 244.

31 Le Loyer (2004) 245.

32 Le Loyer (2004) 245.

As a result, everything and everyone becomes *cocu*, and even sings “*cocu*.” Since the name of the bird is also its song, the whole world resonates with the call: “cuckoo echo the woods, cuckoo the fields / the hills break into cuckoo song,” as if “cuckoo” were a new alleluia.³³

If this cuckoo peace replaces a state of war in which evil is done in the name of virtue, it is tempting to wonder if a hidden political statement is hiding under the mask of cuckoldry. In the foreword, Le Loyer’s words are rather ambiguous: “*comme luy, accusant aussi les affections et vicieuses passions des hommes et les vains tourmens d’une chose qui ne leur touche rien, quoy qu’ilz dissent, ny à leur honneur ny à leur reputation*” (Le Loyer “like [Aristophanes] denounc[es] the affections and corrupted passions of men, and their meaningless torments about something that has no part, whatever they say, in their honor or their reputation”).³⁴ Of course, in his play his words apply to cuckolds—men feel dishonored, even in situations when they should not. Yet the words used by Le Loyer retain a vagueness which makes it possible to project a more serious reading on the universal love shared among the “*saincts cocus*” at the end of the play, as a plea against religious warfare which kills in the name of divine love. If so, *La Néphélococugie* might be, in a very round-about way, closer to *Lysistrata* and other Aristophanic peace plays than initially meets the eye, presenting as it does a utopian world in which cuckoos and quails make love, not war.

The Paradoxes of Racine’s Selective Translation

The second and last pre-nineteenth-century reworking of Aristophanes is Racine’s *Les Plaideurs*, the author’s one and only comedy. It was first performed in 1668 at the Hotel de Bourgogne, and remained Racine’s most frequently performed play at the Comédie Française from the company’s creation in 1680 up to 1900.³⁵ When Racine wrote *Les Plaideurs* in the winter of 1668, the political context could not have been more different from Le Loyer’s times of religious civil war. France was prospering under the aegis of a (still) victorious, art and theater-loving Louis XIV, and the young author had already had significant success with two tragedies: *Alexandre le Grand* (1665) and *Andromaque* (1667). Writing his one and only comedy at that precise point in his career can only be taken as a way to position himself as the equal of Corneille, who was

33 Le Loyer (2004) 247.

34 Le Loyer (2004) 74.

35 Joannidès (1901) xvii.

celebrated both for his comedies and for his tragedies, but also as a superior to Molière since Molière's only attempt at heroic comedy, *Dom Garcie de Navarre* (1661), was a flop. Racine's short three-act farce was successful, especially at court, and it long remained one of Racine's most performed plays.

Les Plaideurs is full of paradoxes. In the first place, Racine claimed that he initially conceived the play for Scaramouche, main actor of the Italian Company, in the role of the mad judge. The Parisian Italian company performed commedia dell'arte, that is to say performances relying on the actors' skillful improvisations on a plot pattern. However, *Les Plaideurs* was very clearly not written as a pattern to improvise on. This rather short farce was written in Alexandrines, and not in prose, as Molière's latest farces had been. Secondly, the play is poised between Old and New Comedy. Most of the characters and situations of the play come from Aristophanes' *Wasps* even if Racine follows only a third of his ancient model (the last two thirds, consisting in Philocleon's disastrous attempts at living the aristocratic life, are left out). Yet Racine managed to add to the Aristophanic material a love plot, which is typical of New Comedy. Lastly, the comedy oscillates between slapstick farce and a sophisticated social and literary satire.

Unsurprisingly, most of the farcical elements are derived from Aristophanes' *Wasps*; these are the translated "jokes" that Racine mentions in his foreword to the reader. The old judge's attempts to escape from every opening in the house, as in the source play: first through the window (I.3); then climbing down the gutter (II.8); and finally from the attic (II.9). At the end of Act II, he desperately tries to judge a case from the cellar through a basement window (*un soupirail*) until one of the two parties falls through with him into the basement (II.13). The final domestic trial takes place in the first three scenes of Act III, and follows very closely 765–1005 of *Wasps*: the accused is also a dog (Labes is renamed *Citron*, "Lemon"), the stolen Sicilian cheese becomes a capon from Le Mans (the reference here is not political as in Aristophanes, but culinary, since the breed was reputed for its taste), and the joke of the silent witnesses is kept, even if they are not actors standing in as kitchen utensils, but the actual head and feet of a dead fowl.

Scatological references are also present in Racine's farce, albeit not in the same passages as in *Wasps*. In the Greek play, the pissing pot provided for the old judge's convenience is rather scandalously doubling as a *klepsydra*, the hydraulic time-piece which guaranteed equality of speech; in Racine's play the little dogs brought in to move the judge to pity end up urinating on him, and the lawyer claims that the moisture actually comes from their tears. In the Greek play, the association between *klepsydra* and pissing pot is highly satirical and political in that it ridicules a symbol of Athenian democratic power,

whereas in *Les Plaideurs* the joke resides in the lawyer's skill in interpreting in a favorable light even the most unseemly conduct of a witness. Finally, the joke of the collapsing judge is taken up and reinterpreted as well. In Aristophanes' play, Philocleon faints because he has acquitted a claimant for the very first time in his career as a *heliast*, and it is a sign that the cure invented by his son has been successful. In Racine's comedy, Dandin collapses too, not from shock at his own verdict, but from boredom during the prolonged oratory of the defense.

However, some of the slapstick also comes from other sources. Aristophanes' whole chorus of waspish *heliasts* is replaced by only two characters, who are both obsessed trial mongers, and both come from the tradition of farcical novels: Chicanneau and the Comtesse de Pimbêche. The name Chicanneau recalls Rabelais' *chicanoux*, a people of bailiffs who are desperate to be beaten since they earn their living from the damages they receive every time someone strikes them (chapter 12 in the *Quart Livre*). The countess de Pimpêche, whose name could be translated as "Countess Stuck-up," recalls a famous character from Antoine Furetière's almost exactly contemporary *Roman bourgeois* (1666): the ever litigating Collantine, a woman whose whole life revolves around trials. Chicanneau and Pimbêche take on the function of the chorus as far as plot is concerned, since they clamor for the return of the judge, but they are litigants, not fellow judges as in *Wasps*. In fact, the two claimants bear the brunt of the play's satire against institutional justice; Dandin, the compulsive judge is mad, but his madness does not reflect on the institution as a whole.

Not only do Chicanneau and Pimbêche stand in for Aristophanes' chorus when the plot requires it, but they also form a chorus of sorts towards the end of Act II. In scene 9, they are joined by L'Intimé, Dandin's glorified secretary, and the three of them start clamoring in unison: "you see here before you my adverse party," then "Sir, I have come here for a little writ," and finally "I have been insulted!"³⁶ This is an interestingly parodic recreation of a chorus. Although these three characters speak as one, each pleads for his or her own case, and their unison hides a cacophony of interests. This querulous harmony is part of the satire leveled against litigants who in suing each other become entirely indistinguishable. The scene has no direct equivalent in *Wasps*, and nothing in what Chicanneau or Pimbêche say throughout the play is imitated from choral odes, but Chicanneau and the comtesse de Pimbêche are clearly the wasps, the two *Plaideurs* that give their name to the play.

Racine skillfully integrated these elements drawn from Old Comedy and early-modern farce with a New Comedy love plot, in order to give his play the

36 Racine (2006) 86.

structure audiences of his time expected. *L'Intimé* is characteristic of this articulation. His name is a technical term of the time for a defendant in an appeal case, and at the end of the play, he becomes the dog's lawyer (a role played by Bdelycleon, the son, in *Wasps*); but he is also a New Comedy valet who plays a crucial role in the love plot since his function is to convince Chicanneau that he is a bailiff (*Sergent*) in order to hoodwink him into signing a wedding contract between his daughter, the beautiful young Isabelle, and Léandre, the judge's son. In order to convince Chicanneau that he really is a bailiff, he acts like one of Rabelais' Chicanoux and lets himself be beaten against a fine. The father's doubts immediately disappear, and he signs his assent to his daughter's marriage without realizing what he is doing. At the end of the dog's trial (Act III.3), one last scene is added in which the two fathers are made to acknowledge the signed document and bless the union. However, this love plot is not the structure of the play; it does not reorganize Aristophanic material. It is, so to say, introduced at the seams, between fragments. The whole love plot is developed in only nine of the shortest scenes, while the rest of the play follows *Wasps*. Act I.1–4, corresponds quite closely to the prologue, and scenes 6–8 can be seen as an imitation of the conflictual parodos opposing Bdelycleon and the chorus of *heliasts* first physically and then rhetorically (lines 230–759). The romantic sub-plot is introduced between those two Aristophanic fragments (I.5); then it is developed in the first six scenes of act II, and brought to a rather abrupt end in the last scene of the play (III.4). It is clearly the motif of the judge who will not stop judging and the plaintiffs who will not stop suing that gives Racine's play its unity, not the imported New Comedy plot.

Reducing the chorus of *heliasts* to a couple of ridiculous litigants is a way for Racine to make the play acceptable to his audience, but it also has profound impact on the tone and range of the satire. Aristophanes aimed his satire at the *heliaia*, Athens' supreme court, as well as its judges, whereas Racine chose as the butt of his mockery the litigious person who misuses institutional Justice, not the institution itself. In *Wasps*, the son Bdelycleon tries and succeeds in changing his father's mind not only about being a *heliast* but also and more importantly about the benefits of the institution itself. Léandre, on the contrary, only has to deal with his father's madness.

There is, however, a passage in *Les Plaideurs* which recalls the political and generational debate of Aristophanes' *Wasps*. In Act I.4, Dandin upbraids his son for wanting to appear more aristocratic than he actually is, opposing the two sources of nobility that existed at the end of the seventeenth century: the new "noblesse de Robe" (obtained through public offices) and older nobility, inherited from the time when titles and lands were obtained through services in war. The father mocks the son for wanting to hide where his own

wealth and status comes from: "A judge's son, pshaw, and you are posing as a nobleman."³⁷ Racine's satire cuts both ways. It attacks the upstart who wants to hide his origins, but also the old nobility *courtisan* who leads the life of a useless lifer and flatters judges.

In his foreword, Racine diplomatically presents Aristophanes' satire as targeting universal types rather than individuals: "it was opportune to exaggerate characters somewhat so as to prevent them from recognizing themselves."³⁸ Yet, keen reader of the play that he was, he must have realized that satirizing universal types is not what Aristophanes is doing in *Wasps*. As the very names of the two main characters indicate, Cleon remains a very explicit target in that comedy, and Racine also knew the rest of Aristophanes' plays well enough to be aware that in most of them, the ancient playwright meant the political figures he ridiculed to recognize themselves, as well as to be recognized by others. The courage of the comic playwright is even the topic of the parabasis in *Wasps*, which casts Aristophanes as a Hercules cleansing the city of its ills and freeing it of its political monsters. Racine deliberately presented Aristophanes, and thus his own play, as safely out of the realm of personal satire; but *Les Plaideurs*, just like *Wasps*, is not without its personal sting. This becomes apparent in the lawyers' speeches at the end of the play. The two improvised lawyers in the dog's trial are exact opposites. Petit-Jean, the prosecutor, cannot read, let alone compose his own oration. In a highly meta-theatrical twist, he enlists the help of the actual prompter to be able to plead.³⁹ L'Intimé, on the contrary, is well versed in bombastic legal prose, and this is where Racine's satire becomes more specific. L'Intimé's highfalutin references to Cicero were recognized at the time as a parody of the rhetoric style of Antoine Le Maistre, one of Racine's old masters at the religious and educational *Janséniste* institution of Port Royal des Champs. The *Jansénistes* had recently been the focus of a literary and religious quarrel in 1666, the "quarrel of imaginary heresies" (*La querelle des Imaginaires*), and Racine had written scathing letters against prominent figures of the *Janséniste* party, and L'Intimé's speeches clearly pursue the same satirical vein on stage.⁴⁰

37 Racine (2006) 45.

38 Racine (2006) 35.

39 This comic touch is a brilliant theatrical application of a plot twist coming from Antoine Furetière's *Roman bourgeois*. In the novel, it is the judge, Belastre, who is so crassly ignorant that he needs a lawyer to prompt him.

40 Racine (1966) 22–8. Racine's two satirical letters were not published during his lifetime, but they circulated sufficiently widely for them to be mentioned by Boileau. The quarrel was initially sparked by a pamphlet by one of the most prominent figures of the Jansenists, Pierre Nicole, in which he accused poets and playwrights of poisoning the public.

The last facet of Racine's strategic "translation" of Aristophanes' wit is literary parody. In the same way as parodying celebrated tragic passages is one of the recurring comic devices of Old Comedy, Racine chooses to parody famous lines lifted from *Le Cid* (1637), the most successful tragedy of his ageing rival, Pierre Corneille. Parody was a full-blown genre at the time, and Racine's latest tragedy before *Les Plaideurs*, *Andromaque*, was being parodied in *La Folle querelle* (1668) during the very same year. In his comedy, Racine follows Aristophanes' example and parodies not a whole tragedy, but well-known lines or situations. Corneille's celebration of aristocratic heroism in the face of death is consistently replaced by a mock celebration of the bourgeois legal profession. For example, one of the most famous lines in *Le Cid*, "His exploits are engraved in the lines of his forehead" (*Ses rides sur son front ont gravé ses exploits*—line 21) becomes in *Les Plaideurs* the almost identical *Ses rides sur son front gravaient tous ses Exploits* (line 154), where the word "Exploits" does not refer to military prowess, but is instead a technical term meaning "official writ."

The mingled satire, literary parody, and slapstick in *Les Plaideurs* was criticized at the time and seen as a sign that the play lacked unity. But the scenes with Chicanneau and Pimbêche act as an emulsifier, blending not only Old and New Comedy, but also different comic tones together. They occupy the narrative function of the chorus in *Wasps*, and some of its dramatic effect: they speak in unison and are ready to put up a fight. These scenes are also where the two plots, the love plot and the Aristophanic plot, intersect: thematically they belong with the conflict between the judge and his son, but in terms of dramatic structures, they are part of the unfolding of the love plot. The dispute between Chicanneau and the countess provides L'Intimé with the pretext he needs to make the father sign the marriage contract unawares. Finally, these scenes are also the passages in the play in which Aristophanes collides most with other references, Rabelais' *Tiers livre* 1546 and *Quart livre* 1552, and Furetière's *Le Roman bourgeois*.

Conclusion

Both Le Loyer and Racine fragment the plays of Aristophanes. Despite Racine's claim that he translated Aristophanes' jokes (so as not to say that he imitated him), and Le Loyer's presentation of his play as an imitation, a greater number of Aristophanes' fragments find their way in *La Néphélucogie*. Beyond the relation to their models, the strategies displayed in the two texts highlight another trait of early-modern reception of Aristophanes in France. Aristophanes did not find his place on the post-humanist stage, as it was being

redefined through a twofold repression of overt sexuality and carnival-like inversion of hierarchies. But what both Le Loyer's and Racine's comedies show is that Aristophanes' bawdy politics and his extraordinary use of language found a literary relay in Rabelais' oeuvre. Until the first translations in prose at the end of the seventeenth century, Aristophanes' comic reached the French-speaking public through the genre of the farce, and in particular in Rabelais' outrageously sensual and satirical linguistic orgy. Rabelais' writing worked for Le Loyer and, more indirectly for Racine, as a textual *dive bouteille* holding forth the powerful Aristophanic wine and saying "TRINCH"—drink.

Aristophanes and the French Translations of Anne Dacier¹

Rosie Wyles

Conjuge Dacerio, Tanaquillo digna parente,
Hic, par ambobus quae fuit, Anna jacet.
Haec & Aristophanem docuit, Latiumque Menandrum,
Haec & Maeoniden Gallica verba loqui.
Hanc igitur, meritis pro talibus, Attica posthac,
Hanc Latia, hanc semper Gallica Musa canant.

Worthy of her husband, [André] Dacier, and her father, Tanneguy [Le Fèvre],
Here lies Anne, who was the equal of both.
She taught Aristophanes, and the Latin Menander [Terence],
and the Maeonian [Homer], to speak French.
Therefore her, by virtue of such merits, hereafter let the Greek,
Latin, and French muse always celebrate in song.²

The epitaph composed by the poet and critic, de la Monnoye, for the outstanding French classicist Anne Dacier (1645–1720) alludes to only a handful of her published works.³ Yet even if this list included all her publications, we

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- 1 I would like to thank Philip Walsh, Edith Hall (who first introduced me to Anne Dacier), Judith Mossman, Elizabeth Wingrove, Malika Bastin-Hammou, and Perry Holmes; any errors remain my own. I am also grateful to the Leverhulme Trust for their generous funding of the research informing this chapter.
 - 2 Epitaph for Mme. Dacier composed by Monsieur de la Monnoye and printed at the end of her obituary in the *Journal des Savants* 38 (1720) 593–607. All translations are my own.
 - 3 Aristophanes (1684), Terence (1688), and Homer's *Iliad* (1711) and *Odyssey* (1716). In some respects the term classicist is anachronistic, and yet in my view it offers the best means of describing Dacier's professional activities. For the full range of her publications, see Itti (2012) 343–8. It is worth noting that her works are published under both her maiden name (Le Fèvre) and her married name (Dacier). For ease of reference, I use Dacier throughout this discussion, even though the first edition of her translation of Aristophanes was published under her maiden name.

might still argue that her achievement in “teaching Aristophanes to speak French” deserved to be placed at its head. Her translation of *Clouds* and *Plutus* (published in 1684) ensured that for the first time the vernacular reader could access two complete plays of Aristophanes in French.⁴ Furthermore, it was a particularly bold undertaking, given the limited work in this area before her and the comic playwright’s unfavorable reputation in seventeenth-century France.⁵ Though her work gained little immediate attention by reviewers and enjoyed only a limited number of re-editions (compared to, for example, her Terence), it was destined to exert a significant influence on the reception of Aristophanes in France and beyond.⁶ This chapter aims to take our understanding of her landmark translation of Aristophanes further in two ways. It will first explore the rhetorical strategies Dacier employed in trying to persuade the vernacular reader of the brilliance of the original, particularly in her *remarques* (“notes”). The extent of Dacier’s exploitation of the vernacular reader’s ignorance in these notes and the manipulation of her position as point of access to the original has not yet gained adequate recognition.⁷ Secondly this chapter will examine the motivations and implications of a radical change that Dacier made to *Clouds*. This change has gone unnoticed in previous discussions of Dacier’s translation but reveals a critical strand in the reception history of Aristophanes and an important element to Dacier’s influence on subsequent English translations.⁸

4 Itti (2012) 130. It was, as Dacier herself emphasizes in her preface (unpaginated), a pioneering work. In this respect it was perhaps more significant than her other translations.

5 See Bastin-Hammou (2010); and Wingrove (2014) 362–3.

6 Its publication was not noted in the *Journal des Savants* (see Itti (2012) 128), and in Farnham’s estimation Pierre Bayle’s review, which did not appear until March 1686, failed to note the true originality and value of Dacier’s work (Farnham (1976) 112). On the mixed views of its success, see Bastin-Hammou (2010) 85. There were four re-editions of her Aristophanes compared to twenty-three for her Terence (1688); for details of these editions, see Itti (2012) 345–6.

7 Dacier’s use of notes to explain, elaborate, and justify her translations has received attention in scholarship, though her rhetorical manipulation through them has been largely overlooked. I am indebted, however, to the brilliant analysis of Bastin-Hammou, which recognized that Dacier’s translation does not always live up to the principles she set out; this offered an important starting point for the approach that I develop here.

8 Excellent discussions of Dacier’s translations of Aristophanes are offered by Farnham (1976) 112–7; Bastin-Hammou (2010); and Itti (2012) 128–34. Waith considers the reception of Dacier’s *Plutus* by Fielding and Young but not of her *Clouds* by James White (Waith (1988) 100–2). Farnham, despite noting the importance of the ἀγών (“debate”) to the understanding of the *Clouds*, does not address Dacier’s choice to change the gender of the contestants (Farnham (1976) 116).

Before considering Dacier's approach to promoting Aristophanes through her translation, it is worth setting out the context for her project and her reasons for undertaking it despite Aristophanes' unfavorable reputation at the time. Her decision to publish this translation can be explained both through the influence of her father, the humanist scholar, Tanneguy Le Fèvre, and her own career ambitions.⁹ Her father taught her and her later husband (André Dacier) at the Protestant academy at Saumur. Tanneguy's choice to educate his daughter in Latin and Greek was unusual for the time and was motivated either by her display of prodigious intelligence or by his desire to rebuke lazy old men.¹⁰ Le Fèvre's pedagogical publications (his handbook for teaching ancient languages and his guide to the lives of ancient Greek poets) suggest that this education gave Dacier the necessary skills to translate the Greek, as well as the desire to rehabilitate Aristophanes.¹¹ Tanneguy's syllabus included *Plutus* and *Clouds*, which he suggests could be made perfectly appropriate with some cuts.¹² He also mentions the importance of sending children to see

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- 9 On Tanneguy's influence, see Farnham (1976) 114; and Wingrove (2014) 363–6. Bastin-Hammou (2010) recognizes the influence of Tanneguy while also making a persuasive case for the significance of this translation in Dacier's deliberate forging of her career path.
- 10 Both versions are recorded in her obituary in the *Journal des Savants* 38 (1720) 593–607. The suggestion that it was intended as a rebuke actually comes from Dacier's Latin preface to her edition of Callimachus (1674) unpaginated: "Restat ut quibusdam seneis capitibus respondeam, quae, ut audi, satis mirari non possunt cur Tanaquillus ille Faber filiam litteris admovendam censuerit, neque illam potius domi pensa carpentem aluerit. Nae illa μωρίου όφλισκάνοντα σώματα facile videre poterant, hoc illum eo animo egisse, scilicet ut esset aliquando quae eis socordiam & ignavium exprobraret [It remains for me to respond to certain old men, who, as I have heard, cannot have their fill of wondering why the famous Tanneguy Le Fèvre advised his daughter to engage in scholarship, and did not rather raise her to card the wool of the house. Indeed those people, incurring a charge of folly, could easily see that he has acted with such judgement that, of course, there finally appears a woman to charge them with stupidity and sloth]."
- 11 Le Fèvre (1664) and (1672). His handbook describes the curriculum followed with his son, but it seems fair to assume it mirrors Anne's experience; see Le Fèvre (1672). This was certainly assumed in the reception of the handbook (and no doubt affected its success). See, for example, Philipps (1728) 18.
- 12 Le Fèvre (1672) says he studied the first two plays of Aristophanes with his son. *Plutus* and *Clouds* were first and second play, respectively, in the first edition of Aristophanes' (then nine) plays in Greek (Venice, 1498) and in subsequent editions. For an overview of editions and translations of Aristophanes, see Giannopoulou (2007). Further evidence is offered by a note written by André Dacier listing the texts which he read between July 1671 and July 1672 (it includes two plays by Aristophanes, read twice); see Itti (2012) 49–50.

theatre as part of their education; the legacy of this was Dacier's theatrical appreciation of these comedies.¹³ Finally, he reports the joy that Aristophanes could engender in a pupil. It was an enthusiasm shared by Anne and demonstrated, for example, in her effusive (and frequently quoted) comment about *Clouds*:

Pour moy j'avouë que je suis si charmée de cette Pièce, qu'après l'avoir traduite & leuë deux cens fois, elle ne me lasse point

For myself I swear that I am so charmed by this play that after having translated it and having read it two hundred times, I am not tired of it.¹⁴

Her choice to translate Aristophanes and to select these two plays in particular is therefore not so surprising in the context of her education. In the preface to her translation, she offers the reader a different reason for her choice of these plays, saying that they are the only two which could be translated into French.¹⁵ While a consideration for decency evidently underlies this claim, there is also perhaps a hint at expediency (these were two plays she knew well and could therefore translate quickly).¹⁶ Dacier's choice of plays to translate was not as daring as her father's: he had translated *Ecclesiastus* (c. 1659).¹⁷ His translation, however, though addressing more shocking material, was in Latin and therefore destined for a limited readership.¹⁸ Rather more significant, in terms

It is generally assumed that Anne went back to study with her father after the breakdown of her first marriage in 1669, on which see Farnham (1976) 42.

13 On Dacier's interest in staging, see Farnham (1976) 117 and Hall (2007b) 10–1.

14 Dacier (1684) preface. It is referred to in Bayle's review (*Nouvelles de la République des lettres* (1686) 251) and in Theobald's dedication of his own translation (Theobald (1715b)).

15 Dacier (1684) preface: "les deux que j'ay traduites sont les seules qui puissent estre bien mises en nostre langue [the two which I have translated are the only ones which can be rendered well in our language]."

16 On decency, see Itti (2012) 129. That Dacier sped in producing this translation, published in the spring after her *Plautus* (1683), is perhaps not surprising given that her livelihood depended on her work. See Farnham (1976) 14.

17 His translation was first published in Saumur in a collection of his letters, *Tanaquili Fabri epistolae*. It was subsequently printed separately in 1665 and 1675, and also appeared as part of the Amsterdam edition of Aristophanes. See Scaliger (1670); and Giannopoulou (2007) 316.

18 On Dacier's decision to be less provocative than her father, see Bastin-Hammou (2010) 88–9.

of impact, is his life of Aristophanes.¹⁹ This work was written in French and could therefore reach a much wider audience. Dacier's preface, as Wingrove has noted, owed a debt to this work, especially for the claim of the comic poet's service to society through his willingness to criticize leading political figures and advise the city.²⁰ Her suggestion that Aristophanes exemplifies the Attic spirit and particularly beautiful Greek also echoes her father's sentiments. The humanist scholar, therefore, laid the foundations for Dacier's landmark translation by offering his daughter an exceptional education and shaping her desire to share her enthusiasm for the author with a wider public. Her work, however, would importantly go further than his since it was not only knowledge of the poet that she made accessible to the public but also the plays themselves in vernacular translation.²¹

She also went further than Jean Racine who, fifteen years before her translation of *Clouds* and *Plutus*, had experimented by producing a French adaptation of *Wasps* (entitled *Les Plaideurs*) in 1669.²² While this was significant for bringing Aristophanes to the attention of the cultural circles of Louis XIV's France, Racine's preface reveals that his aim was fundamentally different from Dacier's. Racine is apologetic in justifying his choice to work with this playwright whom contemporaries held in such low esteem. He reassures his readers that his stylistic preference (like theirs) is for the regularity of Menander and Terence rather than the freeness of Plautus and Aristophanes and adds that he only undertook the project at the insistence of some friends.²³ Moreover, even then, it was simply to see if Aristophanes' witticisms would work in French. The emphasis, therefore, is on exploring the capacities of the French language, rather than on redeeming the ancient author. In any case, the version of *Wasps*

19 Le Fèvre (1664) 116–22. This work, entitled within as *Abrégé des vies des poètes grecs* (*Summary of the lives of the Greek poets*), was nominally written as a guide for his pupil le Comte de Limoges, but the notice to the reader reveals an intention to reach a wider public.

20 Wingrove (2014) 364–5.

21 In her analysis of the significance of the translation of Aristophanes in terms of Dacier's career, Bastin-Hammou makes the astute observation that Dacier's gradual emancipation from her father's scholarly influence was at the same time a movement away from a pedagogic aim and ancient languages (Bastin-Hammou (2010) 91). Meanwhile, Wingrove examines the contrast between the two scholars' projects from a different angle, exploring the way in which Tanneguy's invitation to study Aristophanes becomes "a means for Anne Dacier to grasp the present" (Wingrove (2014) 366).

22 For more on Racine, see Dudouyt in this volume.

23 The issue of regularity of style goes back to ancient criticisms of Aristophanes. On the influence of ancient views on Aristophanes' reception, see Walsh (2008) 15–23.

which Racine produced was an adaptation (rather than a translation), tailored to the tastes of his day.²⁴ Dacier, by contrast, is quite unapologetic in her championing of the ancients, including even the “lesser” playwrights. She actually produced translations of Plautus (1683) and Aristophanes (1684), before tackling the more popular author at the time, Terence (1688). Her aim in undertaking this work was almost the exact opposite of Racine’s professed purpose, as a passage in the dedicatory letter to the first of her translations of ancient comedy (Plautus) shows:

Mon but n’est pas d’en traduire simplement les mots, je veux tâcher de découvrir toutes les finesses de ces excellens Originaux, en montrer l’art, en expliquer la conduite, & en faciliter l’imitation.

My aim is not simply to translate the words, I want to try to reveal all the finer points of these excellent originals, showing their art, explaining the management of the plays’ parts, and facilitating their imitation.²⁵

Her preface, as much as her translation and comments, plays an important part in fulfilling her aim of showing the excellence of Aristophanes’ plays.²⁶ In it, she develops a paradoxical rhetorical strategy which appeals to seventeenth-century taste while insisting that the reader should be willing to lose sight of his or her own century.²⁷ As part of this strategy, she offers careful arguments to justify Aristophanes’ relationship with the contemporary “rules” of theatre (especially the three unities) in his work.²⁸ At the same time, she uses the sheer logic of her rhetoric to coerce the reader into a position

24 See Gross (1965). It is possible, of course, that Racine was taking a rhetorical stance in his preface and that he secretly had greater esteem for Aristophanes, but if this is the case, he is not willing to admit it.

25 It is very difficult to find an English equivalent for the term, *conduite* (translated here as “management of the plays’ parts”); for its range, see Simon (1964) 871.

26 On the importance of the interplay between the “paratext” (including preface and notes) and translation, see Bastin-Hammou (2010). The creation of meaning through this interplay can be seen in earlier vernacular translations of Aristophanes. See Wyles (2007); and on the much earlier Latin translation, see Hadley (forthcoming). On the striking proportion of paratext in Dacier’s translation, see Volpillac-Augier (2012) 146.

27 See Grosperin (2010); and Wingrove (2014) 367–8.

28 Bastin-Hammou (2010) 96–7; and Volpillac-Augier (2012) 148. Racine acknowledges Aristophanes’ lack of “regularity” as one of the major problems with this author (see his preface), which reveals the pressing need for Dacier to try to present Aristophanes as conforming to the “rules.” For a detailed articulation of these “rules,” see Aubignac (1657).

of claiming to like Aristophanes (she anticipates three types of readers and implies only those with the best taste will appreciate this author).²⁹ This coercion is reinforced by her description of this author's style in terms designed to appeal to contemporary aesthetic ideals:

Le stile d'Aristophane est aussi agreable que son esprit, outre la pureté, la nettete, la force & la douceur, il a une certaine harmonie que flate si agreablement l'oreille qu'il n'y a rien de comparable au plaisir qu'on prend à le lire.

The style of Aristophanes is as agreeable as his thought, as well as its purity, lucidity, power and smoothness, there is a certain harmony which caresses the ear so agreeably that there's nothing comparable to the pleasure of reading it.³⁰

While Dacier may have owed the principle of pleasure embedded in this claim to her father's work on the life of Aristophanes, it is clear that she tailors her expression of the idea to appeal specifically to her audience in 1684.³¹ At the same time, Dacier's appropriation of these critical terms, her comments on taste, and her insistence on assessing ancient texts on their own terms, all point to her early engagement in *la querelle des anciens et des modernes*.³² She would play a much greater part (championing the "ancients") in this cultural dispute about the relationship between ancient authors and contemporary literary output later in her career.³³

29 Dacier (1684) preface; and Wingrove (2014) 366–7.

30 She had adopted this same strategy in her first vernacular translation in which she had presented Anacreon as the "most polished and galant Greek poet to survive from antiquity." See Dacier (1681) preface; and Grossperrin (2010) 102. In the case of Anacreon, however, it was hardly such an aesthetic stretch. It is also more pointed here as she appropriates terms which the critic René Rapin had applied to Menander (while criticizing Aristophanes) just a few years before. See Rapin (1674); and Walsh (2008) 33–5.

31 Le Fèvre claims that the draw of reading (in Greek) one of Aristophanes' plays to the end is more powerful than the Sirens (Le Fèvre (1664) 120). Dacier adapts this, presumably taking into consideration that her vernacular readership included women. For Dacier's appeal to a female readership, see Dacier (1681) preface; and Bastin-Hammou (2010) 92. Dacier's adaptation of her father's expression in this passage neatly encapsulates the difference between their projects.

32 See Bastin-Hammou (2010) 92.

33 See Itti (2012) 259–78.

The strategy to make Aristophanes seem “familiar” and acceptable to her contemporaries extends to the presentation of Dacier’s translation.³⁴ The division of the plays into acts and scenes is sometimes taken as further evidence of her concessions to her century.³⁵ In fact, she was following the divisions imposed by the Latin translator of the plays Nicodemus Frischlin.³⁶ Far more striking evidence of her proactive “accommodation” of the tastes of her day is offered by her choice to move the parabasis of *Clouds* and make it a prologue (which she justifies through reference to contemporary manners).³⁷ The language of the translation itself also makes concessions, both modernizing some terms and also, of course, making the obscenities less shocking (or erasing them altogether).³⁸ Despite these concessions, Dacier’s translations have been recognized as landmarks in the reception of Aristophanes since they offer relatively faithful vernacular translations of these two comedies.³⁹ Yet, while on the surface Dacier demonstrates a refreshing commitment to accuracy and indicates when she has altered the original in her translation, her comments are not always as straightforward as they might at first appear.⁴⁰ In fact, Dacier’s apparent “transparency” allows her to win the trust of her readers while exploiting her position as mediator between the original text and the reception of it through her translation. I explore three ways in which Dacier

34 See Volpilhac-Augier (2012) 147–9. Dacier’s attempt to “accommodate” Aristophanes to the tastes of her seventeenth-century audience has long been recognized. See, for example, Malcovati (1952) 43–4; and Farnham (1976) 114–6.

35 See Volpilhac-Augier (2012) 147–9.

36 Frischlin’s translations of *Clouds* and *Plutus* were included in the 1670 Amsterdam edition of Aristophanes to which Dacier is likely to have had access since her father’s translation of *Ecclesiazusae* appeared in it too (see Scaliger (1670)). She certainly knew Frischlin’s work as her comments demonstrate; see, for example, her note on *Clouds* line 965 (Dacier (1684) 354). Frischlin’s division of acts and scenes go back as early as his 1586 publication of his translations, see Frischlin (1586) (I am very grateful to Malika Bastin-Hammou for confirming this). On Frischlin, see Price (1990); and Walsh (2008) 25–31. Similarly, while Dacier’s comments on staging can appear to be influenced by contemporary theatre, they sometimes come from scholarly sources (so, for example, the idea that the personified arguments in *Clouds* drop down to the stage in baskets comes from the ancient scholia, as Dacier herself tells us (Dacier (1684) 352)).

37 “Cela est plus à nos manieres [This is more in keeping with our manners]” (Dacier (1684) preface), on which see Bastin-Hammou (2010) 97.

38 Itti (2012) 130–1 and 185.

39 Farnham describes it as “an epoch-making volume” (Farnham (1976) 112). See also Itti (2012) 130–1.

40 Bastin-Hammou (2010) offers an insightful analysis demonstrating the extent to which Dacier’s comments, and her approach to translation, fail to live up to the promised methodology set out in her preface.

uses her notes to take advantage of the vernacular reader's ignorance and so furthers her cause of promoting Aristophanes' excellence.

Firstly, as has been noted by Éliane Itti, Dacier does not always signal her omissions.⁴¹ The impact of this must be understood in the context of the numerous comments, either in the margin or in the notes in the back, which *do* indicate changes and therefore offer the intended audience (those who could not read the text in the original) the sense that they were being given full access (as far as was possible) to what Aristophanes had written.⁴² An example of such a note is the comment on *Clouds* 965, in which Dacier justifies her choice to make the young men (described in the original as naked, γυμνοὺς) a little more decent:

vêtus fort legerement] Le Grec dit tout nuds; mais cela nous paroît aujourd'huy trop grossier.

very scantily clad: The Greek says totally naked; but this seems too vulgar to us nowadays.⁴³

While reassured by notes like these, vernacular readers would have no idea that, in fact, some obscenities were completely erased without comment (and therefore became invisible). One such example is offered in Dacier's treatment of *Clouds* 733–4, in the exchange in which Socrates remains hopeful that his pupil Strepsiades may have grasped a thought:

Soc. N'as tu rien trouvé encore?

St. Non par bleu.

Soc. Rien du tout?

St. Rien, vous dis-je.

Socrates: Haven't you found anything yet?

Strepsiades: No by Jove.

Socrates: Nothing at all?

Strespsiades: Nothing I tell you.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Itti (2012) 131.

⁴² In fact, as Bastin-Hammou (2010) notes, the explanations offered in Dacier's comments are uneven.

⁴³ Dacier (1684) 354.

⁴⁴ Dacier (1684) 218. *Clouds* 733–4: Σωκ. ἔχεις τι; Στρ. μὰ Δί' οὐ δῆτ' ἔγωγ'. Σωκ. οὐδὲν πάνυ; Στρ. οὐδὲν γε πλὴν ἢ τὸ πέος ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ.

In the original, Strepsiades replies (instead of “Nothing I tell you”), “Nothing, at any rate, except for my penis in my right hand.” While Nicodemus Frischlin’s earlier Latin translation of the play includes Strepsiades’ penis, it disappears from Dacier’s translation and becomes completely invisible to the vernacular reader.⁴⁵ Strepsiades’ manhood is therefore condemned to decades of obscurity until James White brings it back as a “stump” in his 1759 English translation of the play.⁴⁶

Elsewhere we find a different form of omission: the Greek is translated through a euphemism, and there is no note to explain what is missing from the translation. So, for example, in the debate about old and new styles of education, there is a reference to what Dacier translates as the manner in which adulterers are usually punished (*la maniere dont on punit ordinairement les adulteres*).⁴⁷ This normal punishment, as Dover’s commentary explains, involved inserting a radish in the adulterer’s anus and removing his pubic hair with the help of hot ashes.⁴⁸ The details of the punishment are explicitly mentioned in the Greek (and in the Latin translation) but are excluded by Dacier.⁴⁹ However, there is no comment to signal the omission, and the reality beneath the euphemism would only be clear to anyone with the relevant knowledge of ancient Greek society. Dacier therefore plays on the ignorance of the reader while presenting the Aristophanic Greek as more decent than it really is.

Secondly, when Dacier does signal changes to the original, these comments often also function to promote the Greek. So, for example, when Dacier marks changes through an asterisk in her translation and a comment in the margin (“**Le Grec ne dit pas cela, & on ne sauroit le traduire en nostre langue* [The Greek does not say this, but it cannot be translated into our language]”), she manages to evade telling the reader what is in the original, at the same time as implying that the fault is not with the Greek but with the target language (French).⁵⁰ Where details of the omissions are offered, we can see Dacier using the explanation to develop a similar argument. If we look again at the example of the comment on line 965 (“The Greek says totally naked; but this seems too vulgar to us nowadays”), it reveals that while Dacier informs the reader of what is

45 Frischlin’s translation stays close to the Greek; Scaliger (1670) 129:
So: Habes aliquid. St. Nihil equidem. So. an prorsus nihil?
St. Nihil prorsus habeo, nisi penem in dextera.

46 Theobald (1715b) does not refer to it; for “stump,” White (1759) 97.

47 Dacier (1684) 239.

48 Dover (1989) 277 (note on line 1083).

49 Scaliger (1670) 151.

50 As noted long ago by Malcovati (1952) 43.

in the Greek, she also takes the opportunity to reinforce the idea, set out in the preface, of respecting the text on its own terms. Her note implies that the nudity is not offensive *per se*, but that it only “seems” so according to contemporary views.

Dacier’s commitment to her agenda of promoting the original pushes her beyond a simple defense of the “faults” of the text and leads her to claim brilliance even in the case of elements which could be deemed inappropriate.⁵¹ A wonderfully outrageous example of this kind of rhetoric can be found in Dacier’s, now notorious, note on line 706 of *Plutus*.⁵² In the original, Chremylus explains that Asclepius, god of healing, did not object to his farting since the god himself is a “shit-eater” (this term is a literal translation of the Greek word, σκατοφάγον). Dacier circumlocutes by saying that as the god is a doctor, he willingly tastes meat which men have already eaten (*il gousté volontiers aux viandes que les hommes ont déjà mangées*) and therefore is not offended by the smell.⁵³ The circumlocution in itself is not surprising given the explicit vulgarity of the Greek “shit-eater,” but her note on this line reveals how far she is willing to go in using her comments to persuade the reader of the beauty of the original:

Aristophane dit cela tout en un mot, il appelle Esculape σκατοφάγον. Cette reprise a dans le Grec une grace merveilleuse; mais en notre Langue cela seroit insupportable.

Aristophanes says all of that in one word, he calls Asclepius σκατοφάγον. This reply has a marvelous grace in the Greek; but it would be unacceptable in our language.⁵⁴

It is an impressive testimony to Dacier’s rhetorical skills, and her daring, that she can transform this obscene word into an argument for the excellence of the original. The strategy works by exploiting the reader’s ignorance of Greek. This time (unlike the example of nudity above) she does not gloss the Greek, and so the readers have to take her word for it when she tells

51 She does the same in the preface, defending the mix of styles in Aristophanes (usually a point of criticism) by praising it; see Bastin-Hammou (2010) 97–8.

52 See also discussions by Bastin-Hammou (2010) 96; and Wingrove (2014) 370. Fielding and Young have great fun mocking this note in the notes to their own translation (Fielding and Young (1742) 71). See Waith (1988) 101–2.

53 Dacier (1684) 51.

54 Dacier (1684) 139.

them that Aristophanes' use of this word (which unbeknown to them means "shit-eater") has a marvelous grace to it. Without knowledge of the Greek alphabet, the vernacular reader also could not read this word and discover that it does not even sound very beautiful (on the contrary the harshness of the "k" and "ph" in "*skatophagon*" make it rather cacophonous). Here, and elsewhere in her comments, Dacier promotes the beauty, grace, and marvelous qualities of a language which, conveniently in some cases, her reader cannot access. Dacier's strategy to redeem Aristophanes in this translation goes beyond simply making him appropriate to her century; she also controls the reader's knowledge and perception of the original.

Finally, it is possible that in some of the notes, Dacier misdirects her readers about the reason for changes being made (to conceal something about the original). The example of this explored here relates to Dacier's note on changing the gender of the "Right" and "Wrong" (or "Stronger" and "Weaker") arguments, who argue in the first ἀγών ("debate") in *Clouds* (lines 889–1114).⁵⁵ In the original, these male personifications each make a case for a style of education: Right is in favor of the old, while Wrong advocates new. Dacier's choice to make these characters female in her text has major implications for the sense and comic force of these scenes and for our understanding of Aristophanes' reception in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Since this element of Dacier's translation has not gained the scholarly attention it deserves, we will explore its implications below, but first her "misdirection" of readers in her comment on this change will be examined.

Her note appears to offer a reasonable explanation for this gender reassignment and underplays the significance of this radical change to the text. She informs the reader of the change in her comments on the beginning of this ἀγών (her Act 3.2):

Je suis l'Injustice] Il y a dans le Grec: je suis le discours injuste. Mais comme cela seroit ridicule en nostre langue, j'ay mis *La Justice & L'injustice* à la place de ces deux discours; cela est même plus agreable sur le Theatre.

I am Injustice] The Greek has: I am the Unjust Speech. But as this would be ridiculous in our language, I have put Justice and Injustice in place of these two Speeches; this is even more pleasing on the stage.⁵⁶

55 Dacier (1684) 228–41.

56 Dacier (1684) 352.

This comment, I would suggest, offers a dangerously reassuring sense of transparency while it in fact conceals a major problem (from a seventeenth-century point of view) with the original text. Dacier seems to inform the vernacular reader of what is in the Greek original and seems to give a clear explanation for the reason to change the male arguments to female personifications of Justice/Injustice in the French translation. The comment is designed to persuade the reader by appealing to his/her sensibilities in two ways: firstly in demonstrating an empathetic concern over what sounded good in French and secondly by taking theatrical aesthetics into account. The effect of the comment is to leave the reader feeling well-informed and persuaded, and totally unaware of the most problematic issue with translating these two scenes. The issue which Dacier evades and conceals is that in the original ἄγων, “the most striking characteristic of Right is his obsession with boys’ genitals” and that his eventual defeat by his opponent Wrong, involves his yielding to homosexual desire by joining the rest of the “wide-arsed” (εὐρυπρώκτων) men in the audience.⁵⁷ Dacier must have been aware of this issue since even if she had not translated these parts with her father, she was familiar with Nicodemus Frischlin’s Latin translation which included all the pertinent lines of the original.⁵⁸ Her transformation of the gender of these characters, therefore, seems to be part of her strategy of neutralizing this issue. This seems all the more plausible since her excuse that the translation *le discours injuste* would not work in French is revealed to be exactly that, an excuse, by Pierre Brumoy’s choice in 1730 to present these characters as the male *Le Juste* and *L’Injuste* in his translated extract of their exchange.⁵⁹ This comment, therefore, presents an example of Dacier exploiting both her readers’ ignorance and their sensibilities in order to protect the reputation of the ancient poet whom she is trying to promote.

It is worth reflecting further on how this comment operates in relation to the discussion of the play in the preface and the translation itself. If the reader did not notice Dacier’s comment on this passage, it is possible that he or she would not even realize that in the original these two characters were male. The summary of the play in the preface to her translation simply states that these “two women” appear from the machine (as though Aristophanes himself had presented them as female characters in his play). The reader might be further misdirected by Dacier’s comments in the preface about how wonderful Justice’s speeches are, how everything that Injustice says is in the style of a sophist, and how *merveilleuse* (“marvelous”) Aristophanes’ skill is in the

57 Dover (1989) lxiv.

58 Scaliger (1670) 143–51.

59 Brumoy (1730) 3.81.

opposition of these two characters. Here again praise conceals a potential point of criticism in the original text, and at the same time nothing signals the problematic (for Dacier's society) engagement with ideas about homosexual desire. The translation itself eradicates Right's voyeurism and final sexual capitulation. Any trace of voyeurism remaining in Dacier's translation of Right's speech would in any case have a different dynamic when spoken by her female Justice.⁶⁰ Finally, and revealingly, the end of the exchange, which in Aristophanes is explicitly concerned with whether there is any shame in a man having a reputation for being "wide-arsed" (denoting a sexual history with men), in Dacier's translation is transformed into the more general risk of "*infamie*."⁶¹ This term is defined in the French Academy's near-contemporary dictionary (published in 1694) as an action "*vilaine, honteuse, indigne d'un honneste homme* [base, shameful, and unworthy of a gentleman]." Dacier's translation of the ἄγων allows the reader to understand this word, and the issue at stake, to mean adultery, but there is no hint of what is implied by "wide-arsed" in the Greek. Dacier, however, would have been aware of homosexual relationships in ancient Greece, since one of the texts on Tanneguy Le Fèvre's syllabus was Plato's *Phaedrus* which discusses sexual desire in "almost exclusively homosexual" terms.⁶² Whatever Dacier's personal view on this aspect of Greek society, it is clear from the preface to her translation of Sappho that she differed from her father in her published opinions on the related issue of the famous poet's sexuality.⁶³ It seems likely that she played down the reference to homosexual practices in this Aristophanic scene, so as to limit criticism of the author whose work she was trying to promote.⁶⁴ This explanation is made all the more plausible in light of the argument made by Charles Perrault only four years later, against translating ancient texts, in general, on the basis of the "*vilaines mœurs*" ("vile customs") they displayed.⁶⁵

60 For her translation of the relevant speech (lines 961–85 in the original), see Dacier (1684) 233–4.

61 Dover (1989) 227; and Dacier (1684) 239.

62 Le Fèvre (1672); and Dover (1989) lxv.

63 Dacier's father acknowledges the poet's sapphism while Dacier emphasizes the strand of tradition which refers to Sappho's male love interests. See DeJean (1989) 55–7; LeFèvre (1664) 24; and Dacier (1681) preface.

64 Whatever the realities of homosexual relations in Louis XIV's court (see Oresko (1989)), the "official" line was one of repression as was demonstrated in the court scandal of 1682 (see Seifert (2001) 40).

65 In the unpaginated preface to the first volume of his *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes*, Perrault uses the example of the "vile customs" (a woman being hit twice by her jealous

The suppression of the Aristophanic focus on homosexual desire in this ἄγών may also be a result of Dacier's attempt to exculpate Aristophanes from one of the major criticisms levelled at him in the seventeenth century: that he was responsible for Socrates' death.⁶⁶ She goes to extraordinary lengths to counter this issue in her preface through her claim that Aristophanes' motivation in writing *Clouds* had nothing to do with money but rather was to get revenge on Socrates for his disapproval of comedy.⁶⁷ But another aspect to the criticism of Aristophanes in relation to Socrates' reputation goes unaddressed by Dacier. It is neatly articulated by Samuel Parker, later bishop of Oxford, in his 1666 published letter to his friend, and fellow clergyman, Nathaniel Bisbie: "this foul charge of Sodomy, wherewith *Socrates* has been so loudly impeach'd, was nothing else but an abusive invention of *Aristophanes*, who having an implacable picque against him, endeavour'd by all means to render him both odious and ridiculous."⁶⁸ Dacier's later misunderstanding of Alexander Pope's preface to his translation of Homer would suggest that she did not know English, and so it is unlikely that she read Parker's accusation of Aristophanes specifically.⁶⁹ Nevertheless she, and her husband, in later works show themselves to be aware of the need to offer an explanation for Socrates' "attachment" to young men and both do so through the claim that he was concerned with shaping the virtue of youths.⁷⁰ It is therefore possible that Dacier was already aware of this charge against Socrates (and perhaps by extension the charge against Aristophanes for introducing the idea) in 1684. If so, then this concern may have contributed to her choice to cut out the homosexual allusions within the ἄγών since it could be used to argue that Aristophanes was presenting Socrates at the center of such a milieu.

It is striking, however, that in the earlier allusion within the play to Socrates' interest in young men, Dacier does not completely gloss over the implications. In her comment explaining the reference to Socrates stealing a cloak (*Clouds* 177–9) at the wrestling ground (παλαίστρα), she notes that the joke depends on knowledge of Socrates' frequent walks to the παλαίστρα to see the young boys whom "*il avoit la reputation de ne pas hair* [he had the reputation of not

lover) displayed in Theocritus *Idyll* 14 as a means of attacking ancient texts and opposing their translation.

66 See, for example, d'Aubignac (1654) xx.

67 See Dacier (1684) preface; with Bastin-Hammou (2010) 98; and Wingrove (2014) 362–3. The original claim of bribery is made by Aelian in *Historical Miscellany* 2.13.

68 Parker (1666) 20. I discovered this reference thanks to Berland (2007) 240–2.

69 Farnham (1976) 180.

70 André Dacier (1699) 597; and Dacier (1714) 10.

hating].”⁷¹ Although her comment creates some distance from the assertion, both by insisting that this is a reputation (rather than fact) and by the litotes (“not hating”) which underplays the strength of Socrates’ alleged desire, it nevertheless acknowledges the existence of the association. While Dacier had successfully hidden the references to relationships between older men with younger in the ἀγών, the discreet hint to Socrates’ reputation in her comments would gain much greater exposure than she intended through an anecdote told about her and a fellow defender of the ancients, Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux. The story goes that over supper with Boileau, both Daciers, but particularly Anne, took issue with a line in his *Satire XII*, which implied Socrates’ taste for young men.⁷² Anne Dacier sprung to Socrates’ defense and called the accusation a “calomnie.”⁷³ The sting in the tail to the anecdote, however, is that the following day it is brought to Boileau’s attention that Dacier herself had acknowledged Socrates’ predilection in the note to her translation which is quoted verbatim along with the page number.⁷⁴ Whether the story is true or not, it reveals a concern over the question of Socrates’ sexual preferences and also demonstrates how much “damage” even the smallest hint in the notes to Dacier’s translation of Aristophanes could do. The anecdote makes clear exactly why Dacier could not acknowledge the full nature of the ἀγών in her notes.⁷⁵

If Dacier’s concern for Aristophanes’ reputation was her primary motivation for changing the gender of the personified arguments, then, of course, it would have defeated the object to mention this in her comment. Instead, it disappears without a trace. The gender change of these characters, however, has further implications for the ἀγών, since it empowers two women (as Dacier explicitly calls them in her preface) to become the mouthpieces in a debate about the best system of education. This discussion within the play might well have resonated with contemporary concern about “taste” which, as Dacier notes in her preface, everyone was talking about in 1684. The leading influence of women, through their literary salons, on discussions of taste

71 Dacier (1684) 185 and 296–7; with Grosperin (2010) 112.

72 The line refers to Socrates as a very ambivalent friend of Alcibiades. See Boileau (1711) 17.

73 It seems no coincidence that this is the very term that Dacier used in her argument against “accusations” of Sappho’s homosexuality (Dacier (1681) preface).

74 See Monchesnay (1742) 45–7; with Dacier (1684) 297.

75 Itti offers reasons to doubt its veracity (Itti (2012) 285–6). Dacier and Boileau had, in print at least, different views of Aristophanes, which adds another dimension to this anecdote (and may have in part inspired its creation, if it is fiction). See Walsh (2008) 35; and Wingrove (2014) 363–4.

is also relevant to understanding how these two female characters in Dacier's translation might have been understood by her contemporary readership.⁷⁶ The status of the two contestants as representatives of old and new, a typical contrast in Aristophanic ἀγῶνες ("debates"), would also take on fresh meaning in Dacier's cultural context and specifically in relation to *la querelle des anciens et des modernes*.⁷⁷ Dacier's own later explicit involvement in the *querelle* tellingly leads her to make the argument that the formation of literary good taste amongst young people is crucial to the health of the State.⁷⁸ In other words, in her view, the ἀγών and the cultural *querelle* have the same issues at stake. Is it possible that her readers might already have detected this in her presentation of the ἀγών in her translation? Certainly, James White in his 1759 English translation of the play responds to precisely this potential and invites the interpretation of this ἀγών in light of the Ancients and Moderns debate, by naming the arguments the "Genius of Ancient Education" and the "Genius of Modern Education."⁷⁹ Dacier's preface, as has been noted, has nascent hints of the position that she would later develop in the cultural dispute, but perhaps this moment in the play, and her choice to make Justice and Injustice into women also marks the beginning of her engagement in that debate.⁸⁰ As we saw above, she empathized, and perhaps even identified, with Justice (that is, the side of the ancients) rather than the sophistic Injustice. If she has "embedded" herself within the play, then it would have been particularly appropriate given that Aristophanes too had done just that in at least one of his plays.⁸¹ In fact, four years after this, Dacier would justify her approach to translating Terence by claiming that he himself had taught her and she is following his example; perhaps she had already followed Aristophanes' example, in a different respect, in 1684.⁸² We cannot know whether this was her explicit intention, but

76 On women as arbiters of taste through salons, see Timmermans (2005) 152–76.

77 Wingrove analyzes the significance of a different Aristophanic ἀγών (from *Frogs*) in relation to the *querelle* and Dacier's Aristophanes (Wingrove (2014) 352).

78 Dacier (1714) 9–10.

79 White (1759) 113–37.

80 See Bastin-Hammou (2010) 92; and Itti (2012) 130 and 259–78.

81 At given points in *Acharnians*, Aristophanes invites the audience to identify the comic hero, Dikaiopolis, with himself; see Foley (1988); and Olson (2002) xlv–xlvii.

82 Dacier (1688) preface: "Il m'a enseigné luy-mesme à prendre cette liberté, & en le traduisant je n'ay fait que suivre son exemple [He [Terence] himself taught me to take this liberty and in translating his work, I have simply followed his example]." Bastin-Hammou makes a persuasive case for another way in which Dacier was inspired by, and followed the example of, Aristophanes in her translation of his work (Bastin-Hammou (2010) 99).

certainly after the appearance of her defense of the ancients in 1714, it would become an obvious and even inevitable reading of her translation.⁸³

Whether we take Dacier's comment on her change to the text at face value, accepting it as the chance result of the target language's capacity, or we detect a more sophisticated handling of Aristophanes' text by her, the consequences of this radical alteration remain equally significant. The substitution of the male Right and Wrong Argument for the female Justice and Injustice transforms the dynamic of Aristophanes' *ἀγών* and imposes new meaning on his text, not only for seventeenth-century French readers but also for the eighteenth-century English first-time readers of this *ἀγών*.

Within Dacier's lifetime, the impact of her translation of Aristophanes reached beyond France, facilitating, for example, translations of these two plays into English. Lewis Theobald's *Clouds* and *Plutus* appeared in 1715, and though they both professed to be translated "from the Greek," they were (as later translators noted) highly dependent on Dacier's French translations.⁸⁴ This dependency is not only significant for showing the importance of Dacier's work (encouraging and facilitating further vernacular translations to be produced) but also to demonstrate the far-reaching impact of the changes she made to the texts. In particular her presentation of the *ἀγών* with its two female characters would be carried over into Theobald's translation.⁸⁵ Since the earlier English translation of *Clouds* by Thomas Stanley (1655) in his *History of Philosophy* did not include this *ἀγών*, Theobald's translation offered a first encounter with these scene, and any English readers, accessing *Clouds* through it, would assume that these characters were female in the original too.⁸⁶ Fifteen years after Theobald's translation, Pierre Brumoy's *Le Théâtre des Grecs* (*Greek*

83 The compelling details in Dacier's discussion of taste, which invite this work's status as a retrospective intertext to her *Clouds*, are the emphasis on the importance of shaping young minds and saving them from accepting false doctrines (cf. Justice's concern), her advocacy of ancient texts (that is, the old way of doing things), and her reference to Socrates as an ideal model. See Dacier (1714) 9–10.

84 Theobald (1715a) and (1715b). He admits in his dedication (1715a) that he has found Dacier's translation "no small assistance." See comments by Fielding and Young (1742) xii–xiii; Knight (1951) 485; Waith (1988) 101; and Walsh (2008) 36–7 and 43. On Theobald's translations of Latin and Greek authors, see Seary (1990) 15–17.

85 See Theobald (1715b) 39–48.

86 On Stanley, see Walsh (2008) 40–2 and 46. Although Theobald uses a note to indicate the other radical change to the text he adopts from Dacier (that is moving the parabasis to the prologue (Theobald (1715b) 1), he does not inform his readers of the change to the gender of these characters (Theobald (1715b) 39). It is also revealing that he excludes her note about Socrates' reputation for "not hating" young men (Theobald (1715b) 13).

Theatre) appeared, offering (in its third volume) summaries of Aristophanes' comedies and some extracts in translation.⁸⁷ In its pages, the reader could discover that the personified arguments in Aristophanes were male.⁸⁸ The translation of Brumoy's work into English, however, did not appear until 1759.⁸⁹ In the same year, the English reader had the opportunity to read James White's translation of *Clouds* which not only presented the personified arguments as male, but also detailed the precise nature of the "infamy" intended by Aristophanes at the end of the debate: in his translation "infamous" became "large bor'd."⁹⁰ In addition, an English readership would, through White's translation, finally be exposed to the gritty details of the punishment which Dacier's, and then Theobald's, euphemism had masked:⁹¹

Anc. Suppose then, that, complying with your Rules,
He should be raddish-ramm'd, Hair-vellicated,
And cauteris'd with Embers glowing hot . . .

White's translation therefore uncovered much of what Dacier had carefully concealed (and had been kept hidden through Theobald's dependence on her).⁹² This was an explicit aim of his translation, revealed in his dedication through the striking and perhaps appropriately (for Attic comedy), masculine

87 Brumoy's translations were not directly dependent on Dacier, although some of the longest extracts he offers are from plays which had already been translated into French: *Plutus* and *Clouds* by Dacier (1684) and *Birds* by Jean Boivin (1729). This suggests that he found the intermediary text helpful. On Brumoy, see Walsh (2008) 37–9.

88 Brumoy (1730) 3.81.

89 Lennox (1759); and Gray (1985).

90 White (1759) 134–7. Theobald (1715b) 47, had, following Dacier, translated the Greek "wide-arsed" as "infamous"; Brumoy (1730) has "*les scelerats*" ("scoundrels"), which is hardly more enlightening. White's translation of Right's speeches (or as he calls him "Ancient education") also include the details which reveal his voyeurism (White (1759) 118–21). It is worth noting, however, that White mediates the impact of these scenes in a different way: by suggesting that Aristophanes had added it after Socrates ruined the success of the first play (White (1759) 113).

91 White (1759) 134. Theobald offers the following: "he should come to be punish'd in the common Method taken with Adulterers" (Theobald (1715b) 47). Those who could read Greek or Latin would have already enjoyed full access to these details (Scaliger (1670) 151).

92 Theobald adopts Dacier's alterations without necessarily including her note indicating the change to the original; so, for example, the young men, discussed above, are described as "decent and lightly cloath'd" with no note about nudity in original. See Theobald (1715b) 41–2.

image of his version presuming “not by Castration to maim the Original.”⁹³ Before the appearance of White’s *Clouds*, Henry Fielding and William Young had decided to translate *Plutus* in 1742.⁹⁴ They too were aware of the legacy of both Dacier and Theobald’s translations and sought to “stick as close to our Author as possible.”⁹⁵ They were willing to “correct” Dacier and Theobald by being more explicit in their translation (although even they had their limits).⁹⁶

The problem was that translators who knew Greek could see through Dacier’s careful “management” of the plays for her vernacular readership. While her translations may have offered a helpful intermediary text between the Greek/Latin and the English, they could also be subjected to criticism. Nevertheless, her impact on the reception of Aristophanes, beyond the actual words of the translation themselves, is demonstrated in three ways: 1) by catalyzing an international race to make Aristophanes’ work accessible through accurate vernacular translations, 2) by offering an understanding of Aristophanes’ value which rehabilitated the reputation of this playwright, and 3) by enabling his comedies to be “staged” through publication. Dacier’s work, and then Brumoy’s, put the French ahead in making Aristophanes accessible.⁹⁷ While the scope of Brumoy’s work was markedly different from Dacier’s (in that it offered summaries of all Greek plays), he shared her aim of trying to make Aristophanes accessible to the vernacular reader.⁹⁸ The sense of competition, through learning and the production of translations, is clearly revealed in White’s dedication:

And hence in our own Country, and in France, which perhaps is second to our own in Learning, Sense and Dignity, have the Labours of the Learned, and of Ladies*, elevated far above the Grammarian’s Sphere, condescended to assist his Office, by forming Versions proper to the Student. (At the bottom of the page: * Madam Dacier and Miss Carter)⁹⁹

93 White (1759) viii. White’s intention to show the full extent of Aristophanes’ attack on Socrates leads to a far more explicit translation (even if at times he has to hold back). He explains this in his notes on the opening speech (White (1759) 3).

94 On Fielding and Aristophanes, see Hall (2007a) 72–4; and Kinservik in this volume.

95 Theobald (1715a); and Fielding and Young (1742) 1.

96 Waith (1988) 100–2; and Walsh (2008) 46–7. It should be noted, though, that they were not always scathing of Dacier’s work. See Knight (1951) 485.

97 De la Monnoye’s epitaph also seems to hint at the national significance of her success (teaching the ancient authors *French* and the *French* muses singing to celebrate her).

98 On the difference in their approach to translating/relating the plays, see Volpilliac-Auger (2012) esp. 149–51.

99 White (1759) ii. Rivalry between England and France expressed through female ability to translate ancient Greek and Latin can already be seen with the publication John Coke’s

It is also possible to detect hints of patriotic one-upmanship in Fielding and Young's notes.¹⁰⁰

At the same time as rivalling Dacier, however, these translators also maintained her legacy through continuing the rehabilitation of Aristophanes' reputation. This legacy had been established in part by Brumoy who quotes her at length in her praise of Aristophanes and thus crystallizes her reputation as a champion of the ancient playwright.¹⁰¹ Even more importantly, he owed a debt to her work for his argument about the social function of Aristophanes and his status as a champion of democracy.¹⁰² The English-speaking world had direct access to this idea, and many of the others relating to Aristophanes presented in Dacier's preface, through Theobald's "prefatory discourse" to his translation which, in effect, offered a compressed version of hers.¹⁰³ Fielding and Young pick up the tradition of emphasizing Aristophanes' service to the state, as a patriot, and in making this argument they closely echo Dacier's language (referring to Aristophanes' willingness to confront its enemies).¹⁰⁴ Meanwhile, White, despite some ambivalence towards Aristophanes (on account of his treatment of Socrates), recognizes that Greek drama makes an excellent model for composition and extends this compliment to Aristophanes by his choice to translate him.¹⁰⁵ In this respect Dacier's aim to facilitate imitation was shared by White and lived on through his translation.¹⁰⁶

Finally, with the exception of Racine's adaptation of *Wasps*, Aristophanes was not being physically performed in France and in a sense Dacier's comments on staging initiated a performance tradition of sorts. This was further encouraged through the frontispiece of the 1692 Paris edition of her

The Debate in 1550. Voltaire's boast, in 1750, of the conquests made by the French language and literature is indicative of the broader sense of competition (Farnham (1976) 17).

100 For example, Fielding and Young refer pointedly to Dacier as "a certain French translator" (Fielding and Young (1742) 71).

101 Brumoy (1730) 3.xx–xxi. The popularity of his work ensured that her reputation was widespread (it enjoyed multiple re-editions and was translated into English, German, and Italian). See Bastin-Hammou (2011) 41.

102 Bastin-Hammou (2011) 31; and Piana (2011). Although Dacier herself owed a debt to her father for this view, the prominence of her translations and direct responses to her work suggest its importance in establishing this as a major strand in Aristophanes' reception.

103 Theobald (1715a). The prefatory discourse shows an extraordinary level of dependence on Dacier's preface translating much of it directly into English (without acknowledgement).

104 Fielding and Young (1742) dedication.

105 White (1759) iv.

106 A further potential sphere of influence for this aim was through the playwright William Congreve (1670–1729) who had a copy of Dacier's translations of Aristophanes in his library (Hodges (1955) 43).

translation (showing either Dacier herself or the muse of comedy in front of a theatre stage upon which a performance is taking place).¹⁰⁷ Theobald would respond to this element of Dacier's translation (and legacy) by adopting her comments about staging and also publishing his translation of *Clouds* with a memorable moment from that staging. Its frontispiece shows Socrates hanging in a basket, suspended on pulleys, with a curtain framing the image and an arch in the backdrop to hint at theatre performance.¹⁰⁸

In conclusion, the case study of Anne Dacier's translation of Aristophanes repays examination in three respects. First, it enables us to recognize the different types of impact that a translation might have on subsequent works and above all to acknowledge that it is not only the translation itself, which is important to this, but the paratext and intentions of the project. This study reveals that the difference made to Aristophanes' reception through Dacier's translation extends beyond the simple fact of enabling greater access to this author. Second, the re-assessment of the nature of the paratext, and in particular the comments, which accompany the translation, can shed fresh light on how the translations and the translator operate. In Dacier's case, noting a change to the text which is carefully explained but turns out to conceal a hugely significant issue in the reception of Aristophanes, opens up a new understanding of what *Clouds* could have potentially meant in France at the end of the seventeenth century and what it came to mean through the gender change which Dacier imposed on two of its characters. This change would have ramifications for the English reception of Aristophanes. Third, identifying the exploitation of the ignorance of the vernacular reader in some of Dacier's notes has broader implications for the understanding of her other translations which would reward re-evaluation from this perspective. Above all, this case study offers a more widely-applicable lesson about the nature of the translator's power in the reception history of an author and text.

¹⁰⁷ Hall (2007b) 10–1.

¹⁰⁸ Theobald (1715b).

The Verbal and the Visual: Aristophanes' Nineteenth-Century English Translators

Philip Walsh

Introduction

This chapter will begin with a critical survey of significant nineteenth-century English translators of Aristophanes. Some of these translators are well-known literary figures: Oscar Wilde and Algernon Charles Swinburne, for instance. Others are less famous—academics like Benjamin Hall Kennedy and amateurs like Benjamin Bickley Rogers—but these men possessed outsized influence in shaping perceptions about the plays of Aristophanes during a century in which they began to gain a more secure foothold in British literary culture. Critics and translators were drawn to Aristophanes' beautiful poetry, fantastic plots, and trenchant wit; historians mined the plays for evidence in wide-ranging debates over the nature of democracy and integrated them into descriptions of ancient Greek social and cultural practices.¹ Translations of Aristophanes—prose and verse, free and literal, abridged and unexpurgated (relatively)—were the predominant vehicles through which interest in the extant plays spread in Britain. As interest grew, a number of literary and theatrical adaptations also emerged. Diverse in form and content, these texts and productions further influenced the broad reception of Aristophanes, and many have been the focus of significant scholarly treatment elsewhere.² One notable exception, however, is Aubrey Beardsley's pen and ink illustrations of *Lysistrata* (1896), which

¹ For more on nineteenth-century debates over Aristophanes' political views and influence, see Walsh (2009).

² On Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Oedipus Tyrannus; Or, Swellfoot the Tyrant* (1820), see White (1921), Laqueur (1982), Erkelenz (1996), Wallace (1997), Jones (2000), Gladden (2002), Morton (2009), and Mulhallen (2010). On James Robinson Planché's *The Birds of Aristophanes* (1846), see Granville-Barker (1932), Fletcher (1979–81), Hall and Macintosh (2005), and Hall (2007a). On Robert Browning's *Aristophanes' Apology*, see Jackson (1909), Hood (1922), Tisdell (1927), Smalley (1940), McCusker (1984), Karlin (1993), and Riley (2008). On Henry Fleeming Jenkin's production of Aristophanes' *Frogs*, see Hall and Macintosh (2005), Hall (2007a), and Walsh (forthcoming). On Aristophanes and the Cambridge Greek Play, see Macintosh (1997), Easterling (1999), and <http://www.cambridgegreekplay.com/plays/1883/birds>. On William

accompanied Samuel Smith's prose translation of the play. A visual translator in his own right, Beardsley imbued his eight illustrations with a shocking mixture of humor, obscenity, and sexuality that had not been previously expressed in English translation. Although not widely known or distributed until long after Beardsley's death, his illustrations marked with profane exclamation not only Beardsley's intense creativity but also a profound change in the perception and stylization of Aristophanic comedy.

The Plays of Aristophanes in English Translation

In an article originally published in the *Quarterly Review* (July 1820), John Hookham Frere, a verse translator of five of Aristophanes' plays, praises Thomas Mitchell's 1820 versions of the *Acharnians* and *Knights*: they are "the best that has hitherto appeared in our own, or, as far as our acquaintance extends, in any other modern language." Despite these remarks, Frere was quick to suggest that the "style" of the translations ("the style of our ancient comedy in the beginning of the 16th century") is "wholly unsuitable for representing or reproducing that peculiar species of drama to which the comedies of Aristophanes belong."³ Frere's comments are typical of early nineteenth-century critics, many of whom were dissatisfied with the value of previous English translations of Aristophanes.⁴ A general point of agreement among them was that these translations were ineffective in demonstrating the range of Aristophanes' language, as well as his sense of metrical variety. During the Romantic and Victorian period, however, semantic register and meter became prominent, and many translators worked to create modern equivalents for the complex meters employed in the original Greek. Mitchell and Frere were early figures in this movement, exploring and connecting in translation the

Schwenck Gilbert, see Hamilton (1970), Sichel (1970), Garson (1972), and Sommerstein (1973b).

3 Frere (1820) 474. The *Quarterly Review* was a periodical that was a stronghold for literary and political conservatism (Wallins (1983) 359–67).

4 Up through the beginning of the nineteenth century, Aristophanes suffered from a generally ambivalent reception in Britain. From 1651 (when the first English translation of Aristophanes appeared) to the end of the eighteenth century, the eleven extant plays were translated sporadically. Of them *Clouds* (partially or fully translated at least seven times), *Plutus* (partially or fully translated at least five times), and *Frogs* (partially or fully translated at least three times) drew the most attention. See Hines (1968), Steggle (2007), Hall (2007a) and (2007b), Wyles (2007), Walsh (2008), and Miola (2013). For Henry Fielding's engagement with Aristophanic comedy, see Kinservik in this volume.

political *and* poetic dimensions of Aristophanic comedy. Mitchell did not possess Frere's natural talent for light verse, but for over twenty-five years, he was engaged in the interpretation of Aristophanes' work, not only through numerous essays for the *Quarterly Review*, but also through his own translations and commentaries. His *Acharnians*, *Knights*, and *Wasps* appeared between 1820 and 1822, and in the 1830s, he produced commentaries on these same plays, as well as two others on *Clouds* and *Frogs*.⁵

Although Mitchell's greatest contribution to British reception of Aristophanes was his historical criticism of Athenian literature and culture, his translations helped to free the plays from the grips of unimaginative prose and blank verse, both of which had been frequently used in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century translations. For example, at *Acharnians* 204–7, the chorus of old men enters in pursuit of Amphytheus, the immortal treaty bearer. Mitchell translates Aristophanes' trochaic tetrameter catalectic lines with his own internally rhymed trochees:

Double, double toil and trouble, quicken step and change your plan,
Inquisition or petition must arrest the shameless man;—
It concerns her pride and honour that our town his motions know
Who has back'd him, or has track'd him, forward let him come and show.

In the first half of the first line, Mitchell evokes the three witches of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, introducing a moment of tragic parody, which, though not in the original, is nevertheless a common component of Aristophanic humor. Tragic parody is especially difficult to translate both because in Greek it often appears suddenly in rapid dialogue, and because it relies on the knowledge of the audience or reader to understand the original reference and the marked change in tone. Mitchell's strategy was to utilize a well-known phrase from English drama in order to juxtapose high and low: out of the mouths of the rustic and exasperated *Μαραθωνομάχαι* ("Marathon fighters") comes the lofty and the tragic. In blending Shakespeare into the text, however, Mitchell made himself a target of Frere's opprobrium:

[the] language of translation ought . . . to be a pure, impalpable and invisible element, the medium of thought and feeling, and nothing more;

5 Educated at Pembroke College, Cambridge, Mitchell was elected a fellow of Sidney Sussex College in 1809, but left that position three years later because he did not want to be ordained. For more on Mitchell's engagement with Aristophanes and his political conservatism, see Walsh (2009).

it ought never to attract attention to itself; hence all phrases that are remarkable in themselves, either as old or new; all importations from foreign languages and quotations, are as far as possible to be avoided.

Such importations had, in Frere's view, "the immediate effect of reminding the reader, that he is reading a translation, and that the illusion of originality . . . is instantly dissipated by it."⁶

As Frere's comments suggest, Mitchell's strength was not in inspired verse translation but in popularizing Aristophanes through prose essays and commentaries. Frere, by contrast, was an accomplished writer of verse and a polymath translator of Greek, Latin, Spanish, Italian, German, and French. He is perhaps best-known for *The Monks and the Giants* (1817–8), a mock-romance poem whose use of *ottava rima* may have inspired the form of Byron's *Beppo* (1817) and *Don Juan* (1821). Unlike Mitchell the public intellectual, Frere had little interest in stoking popular fervor about Aristophanes. In 1818, he did publish a selection from the *Frogs* (674–991) in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, but his complete verse translations did not appear until the late 1830s.⁷ Frere shied away from public life, and after an unsuccessful foray into politics and the illness of his wife, he left Britain, retiring to Malta in 1821. There he enjoyed the life of an ἀπράγμων ("a free and easy man") and worked sporadically on diverse literary projects, including Aristophanes.⁸

In his review of Mitchell and in his own translations, Frere highlights the theatrical aspects and performative context of Old Comedy; for instance, his

6 Frere (1820) 481.

7 Frere most likely began working on his translations of Aristophanes in the mid-1810s, and received encouragement from Samuel Taylor Coleridge, whom he met at Cambridge, and to whom he showed his unfinished translations of *Knights* and *Frogs* (von Romberg (1981)). His verse translations of *Acharnians*, *Knights*, *Birds*, and *Frogs* were first published by Malta Government Press in 1839. In the following year, Pickering followed suit in England, but if his introduction to *Knights* is taken seriously, Frere never intended his translations to be published widely: "The following translation not being calculated for general circulation, it is not likely that it should fall into the hands of any reader whose knowledge of antiquity would not enable to dispense with the fatigue of perusing a prefatory history" (J.H. Frere (1872) 63). It was not until Frere's nephews published his collected works in 1872 that his translations (including a selection from *Peace*) were made available to the reading public.

8 One eulogizing critic describes Frere as a man who "belonged to a class of men of peculiar type, and thoroughly British—that of gentlemen-scholars; not learned after the fashion of High Dutch commentators, nor of schoolmasters, nor of fantastic poets who ape the antique, nor perhaps learned in any serious sense at all; but thoroughly imbued with the very heart and spirit of ancient letters" (Merivale (1872) 241).

version of *Birds*, he writes, is “intended to convey some notion of its effect as an acted play, and to illustrate certain points of dramatic humour and character discoverable in the original.”⁹ He also laments the competitive disadvantage of a translator compared to an author, his actors, and an audience:

... words are his only instrument—words, in the form of dull, naked, uniform letter-press; he must, therefore, make use of them as well as he can, and he must make use of more of them, if he wishes to give his readers a tolerably easy chance of comprehending the conception, which he has formed of the original design of the author, whom he professes to reproduce.¹⁰

For Frere, the objective of an ideal translator is the “illusion of originality”—to sweep up the reader so that he does not realize that he is reading a translation.¹¹ To maintain this illusion, a translator must omit topical allusions, and instead resolve quotidian details into universal genera, thus expanding from the scope of the original text. In his translation of the parabasis of *Birds*, his choice of meter therefore is not anapestic tetrameter catalectic, as in the original Greek, but rather an amenable four-beat line with complex internal rhymes (e.g., “featherless . . . querulous . . . calamitous”).¹² Hoping to generalize Aristophanes’ parody of philosophical cosmogony, he maintains the reference to Prodicus of Ceos, the well-known sophist (692), but excludes the esoteric joke on Orestes, the son of Timocrates (712). Frank representation of Greek sexual practices was taboo for nearly all Romantic and Victorian translators, and Frere conformed to that norm, omitting the remarks about pederasts bearing birds as gifts for young lovers (705–7). The opening lines to the parabasis (685–9) reflect the light tone with which he imbues the entire passage:

9 Frere (1872) 137.

10 Frere (1820) 490.

11 Frere (1820) 481.

12 *Clouds*, *Plutus*, and *Frogs* were most popular before 1800, but the reputation of *Birds*, with its cunning hero and utopian theme, grew precipitously throughout the nineteenth century. Daniel Keyte Sandford, verse translator of *Plutus* and *Clouds* (1835), described *Birds* as “the most fantastic production of his fantastic genius . . . that *Midsummer’s Night-Dream* of the Grecian stage, of which it is not so much to say, it is what Shakespeare, had he been an Athenian, would have written, or, had he read Greek, would have admired” (Sandford (1835) 286). From 1810 onwards, the play (or selections from it) was translated in Britain at least once a decade, and it became, in the view of most critics, the quintessential ancient comedy.

Ye Children of Man! whose life is a span
 Protracted with sorrow from day to day,
 Naked and featherless, feeble and querulous,
 Sickly calamitous creatures of clay!
 Attend to the words of the Sovereign Birds,
 (Immortal, illustrious, lords of the air)
 Who survey from on high, with a merciful eye,
 Your struggles of misery, labour, and care.

Also attracted to the challenges of metrical translation was Frere's contemporary, Henry Francis Cary, whose *Birds* (with a scene from *Peace*) appeared in 1824. An Oxford man and later a keeper of books at the British Museum, Cary is best known for his 1814 blank verse translation of Dante's *Divina Commedia*. His *Birds*, however, was owned by Coleridge and remained well-regarded throughout the century.¹³ In translating Aristophanes, Cary tried to vary his approach, finding English alternatives for difficult Greek meters, and mixing in iambs and anapests of different lengths. For the parabasis, he substitutes iambs of seven feet for the Aristophanic anapest, a meter, "which," he explained, "the Greeks managed with so much adroitness, [but] becomes very unwieldy in our hands."¹⁴ The iambs match the original in terms of metrical feet, and what results is a longer rhyming line and a tone more grandiloquent than Frere's (lines 685–9):

Oh come, ye men, ye brittle things, mere images of clay,
 Ye flitting leaves, ye shadowy shapes, ye creatures of a day,
 Poor, wingless, wretched mortals ye, like nothing but a dream;
 Give heed to us, and list for once to an immortal theme.
 Immortals we, and live for aye, from age and sorrow free;
 Our mansion in the viewless air; our thoughts, eternity.

At mid-century, Aristophanes had at last emerged as a canonical ancient author, but he could not be neatly integrated into British literary culture. The

13 Coleridge's copy of Cary's *Birds* (now housed at Harvard University) was inscribed to Coleridge "with the translator's affectionate remembrances" (see Coleridge (1980) 119). In a letter to his brother George (October 1824), Frere thanks him for sending a copy of Cary's translation to Malta, writing that "it is much better than Mitchell's translation" (H.E.B. Frere (1872) 185).

14 Cary (1824) viii.

obscenity, ribaldry, and sexual content of his plays still troubled even his most ardent admirers. That tension, Aristophanes' troubling acceptance as canonical, is readily apparent in the verse translations of Benjamin Bickley Rogers, whose commanding presence within the field of Aristophanic studies during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries can perhaps be likened to the dominance of George Grote over ancient Greek history or Gilbert Murray over Euripidean studies.¹⁵ Rogers was not a professional scholar, but, like Frere and Grote, an amateur who immersed himself in the study of the ancient world. Over the course of nearly sixty-five years, he edited and published translations of all the extant plays and remained for many years the translator of Aristophanes for the Loeb Classical Library (1924). Rogers' first edition of Aristophanes complete with Greek text, translation, and commentary was *Clouds* (1852), a play that he began working on as an undergraduate at Wadham College, Oxford.¹⁶ He then turned to the law, building a successful career as a barrister while still publishing new editions sporadically over the next few decades: first *Peace* in 1866, then *Wasps* in 1875, and *Lysistrata* in 1878 (without text or commentary).¹⁷

In his introduction to *Clouds*, Rogers insisted on the importance of meter in his approach to translation: "I have endeavored to keep more closely to the original, both in the text and in the metre, than has been done in any preceding version."¹⁸ Like Mitchell, Frere, and Cary, he strove to match Greek meters with English equivalents, and in *Clouds* no passage presents a greater interpretative challenge for a translator than the entrance hymn of the chorus of clouds. As August Wilhelm Schlegel once observed, it is "an allegory on the metaphysical speculations which do not rest on the ground of experience, but float about,

15 For more on Rogers, see Robson in this volume. For more on Murray, see Lippman in this volume.

16 Rogers notes that he was introduced to Aristophanes by his older brother Thomas, a fellow at Corpus Christi: "one evening . . . when all the family had retired, he went through the *Clouds* with me . . . He was an admirable scholar, and made me realize the Comedy so vividly that almost before we had come to the end it began to turn itself into verse in my mind" (Rogers (1916) xxxviii). For a concise biography of Rogers, see Sommerstein (2004) 832–4.

17 Explaining the omissions in *Lysistrata*, Rogers offers a special notice at the beginning of the book: "Finding that I have not at present, and fearing that I may never have, sufficient health to carry through the Press complete editions of the remaining Plays of Aristophanes, similar to my edition of the *Wasps*, I propose to print the bare translations, long since finished, without text or commentary" (Rogers (1878) n. pag.).

18 Rogers (1852) x.

without any definite shape or body, in the kingdom of possibilities.”¹⁹ The clouds blend religion, sensuality, humor, poetry, and the theater, and the mixing of these elements is so powerful that John Addington Symonds declared the entrance hymn as “untranslatable.”²⁰ Rogers tried to render it by matching Aristophanes’ dactylic lines of variable length with his own English dactyls. He also relied heavily on anaphora and rhyme, neither of which is present in the original but which nonetheless in English produce the effect of a chant. The spirit of his translation is free; as a reviewer of the second edition (published in 1916) complains, “‘Clouds of all hue’ . . . is not the meaning of *ἀέαντοι Νεφέλαι*.”²¹ The opening lines (275–90) are as follows:

Clouds of all hue,
 Rise we aloft with our garments of dew.
 Come from old Ocean’s unchangeable bed,
 Come, till the mountain’s green summits we tread,
 Come to the peaks with their landscapes untold,
 Gaze on the Earth with her harvests of gold,
 Gaze on the rivers in majesty streaming,
 Gaze on the lordly, invincible Sea,
 Come, for the Eye of the Ether is beaming,
 Come, for all Nature is flashing and free.
 Let us shake off this close-clinging dew
 From our members eternally new,
 And sail upwards the wide world to view.
 Come away! Come away!²²

19 Schlegel (1833) 122.

20 Symonds (1880) 205. Earlier in the essay he elaborates on the nature of the play: “The sophists professed two chief subjects, τὰ μετέωρα, or the science of natural phenomena; and rhetoric, or the art of conquering by argument. Aristophanes, in the *Clouds*, satirizes both under the form of allegory by bringing upon the stage his chorus of Clouds, who, in their changeful shapes . . . are the very forms and symbols of the airy, misty Proteus of verbal falseness and intangible irreligion which had begun to possess the Athenians . . . Everything that deceived and concealed, that shifted and elided, that stole away ‘the enchanted gazer’s mind’ [from the first sestiad of Christopher Marlowe’s *Hero and Leander*] . . . all fascination and unrealizable desire, was symbolized by clouds” (Symonds (1880) 201–2).

21 Elliott (1916) 225.

22 In the commentary to the second edition, Rogers adds a more literal trochaic translation:

We Clouds ever floating in the blue,
 Lift we up our dewy essence, airy-bright, for all to view,
 Let us rise from father Ocean with his hoarsely-booming roar,

Rogers too was acutely aware of Aristophanes' obscenity and sexual humor, but as a conservative mid-Victorian translator, he chose not to represent them. In his 1852 edition of *Clouds*, he signaled the dilemma facing the translator of Aristophanes:

It is a question confessedly difficult to answer, in what manner and to what extent a translator is bound to conform to the conventional decorum of the age and notion in which he lives: whether he is to omit whatever in the least degree runs counter to those rules by which an author is now happily compelled to abide . . . or to follow his author even in his wildest extravagances, which would in many cases render his translation unreadable to by far the greater portion of English Society.²³

Although Aristophanes' indecorous character disturbed him, Rogers defended the comedies because of "the excellence of their moral doctrines, the practical good sense . . . with which Aristophanes can, when he chooses to speak soberly, treat the great questions of Religion and Politics in Athens, and lay bare the causes of decay."²⁴ For Rogers, Aristophanes was a voice of reason, virtue, and wisdom in Athens, a principled man who should be admired despite his "occasional blemishes."²⁵ Contemporary critics generally praised this interpretive approach, perhaps because it gave no offense and conformed to the dominant middle-class mores of nineteenth-century Britain.²⁶ Thomas Mitchell, it seems, too often left out sections (at times long sections) that contained physical or sexual obscenity, for he earned the title, "Bowdler to the Attic comedy,"

Till we reach the lofty hill-tops, forest-clad for evermore.
Thence gaze we on the peaks far seen across the plain,
And on holy Earth refreshing her crops of golden grain,
And the bright majestic Rivers, ever singing in their glee,
And the hoarsely-sounding murmur of the everlasting sea.
For the never-resting Eye of Ether in the sky.

Is shining mid the dazzle of the rays;
Let us shake the misty showers from these deathless forms of ours,
And sail upward on the wide world to gaze.

23 Rogers (1852) iii.

24 Rogers (1852) iii–iv.

25 Rogers (1852) iii.

26 For instance, one reviewer of Rogers' *Peace* remarks that he "possesses most of the qualifications for undertaking a complete translation of Aristophanes into English. He is scholarly, has a sense of humor, and yet instinctively repudiates ultra-coarseness" (Davies (1867) 524).

from the *Edinburgh Review*.²⁷ John Hookham Frere elides less frequently, deflecting the force of obscenity through elevated language or periphrasis (e.g., at *Acharnians* 1170—"A ponderous sir-reverence" for πέλεθρον ἀρτίως κεχρσμένον—literally "a recently shat piece of dung").²⁸ Through the very end of the nineteenth century, no English translations presented Aristophanes uncensored, save perhaps for those of William James Hickie, whose prose versions were published by the Bohn's Classical Library in the two-volume edition of 1853.²⁹ The purpose of Hickie's "new and literal translation" was to "give what Aristophanes actually wrote, as far as could be accomplished in English words, excepting in passages of extreme indelicacy, which are necessarily paraphrased."³⁰ Bohn's mission was to make Aristophanes accessible to a popular reading audience, and in this spirit Hickie includes in the footnotes extracts from the verse translations of Frere, Cary, Benjamin Dann Walsh (1837), and Charles Apthorp Wheelwright (1837), as well as selections from the German translations of Johann Heinrich Voss (1821) and Johann Gustav Droysen (1835–8).³¹ This approach was successful; the Bohn's Aristophanes was reprinted over ten times before 1900.³²

27 Sandford (1835) 182. In a previous review of Mitchell's translations, Sandford reports that "Of the *Acharnians*, a play of about 1200 lines altogether, his version omits nearly 500,—not very far from the half. The 1400 lines of the *Knights*, are despoiled of upwards of 400" (Sandford (1820) 304). For a detailed discussion of nineteenth-century expurgation of Aristophanes, see Ruffell (2012) and, more generally, Roberts (2008).

28 Frere suggests that "with respect to mere grossness, vulgarity and nastiness, in a translation of Aristophanes, an occasional spice of each, sparingly applied . . . may be necessary to give a notion of the genuine flavour of the original" (Frere (1820) 490).

29 Bohn's Classical Library was a trendsetter in mid-nineteenth-century Britain, offering a variety of titles from the ancient world at a discount relative to its competitors (initially, three shillings, sixpence per volume; and later five shillings per volume) (Mack (1991) 60).

30 Hickie (1853) v–vi. For an analysis of literalness in nineteenth-century English translation, see Reynolds (2005).

31 B.D. Walsh (1808–69) graduated from Trinity College, Cambridge, and published verse translations of *Acharnians*, *Knights*, and *Clouds*. The Rev. C.A. Wheelwright (*d.* 1858) also graduated from Trinity College, Cambridge, and was a translator of Pindar, Seneca, and Juvenal. His translations of the eleven extant plays are in blank verse. J.H. Voss (1751–1826) was a professor at Heidelberg and the prolific translator of Greek and Latin poetry, including Homer, Virgil, and Ovid. His translations of Aristophanes are literal and published in three volumes with notes. J.G. Droysen (1808–84) was a German translator of Aeschylus (1835) and a prominent historian. His translations of Aristophanes, published in three volumes, are idiomatic and accessible.

32 For the significance of Bohn's Classical Library, see Currie (1996) and Haynes (2005).

In contrast to the reserve and stateliness of Rogers' translations of Aristophanes was the sensuality of Oscar Wilde's "Chorus of Cloud Maidens," a piece written in 1874 and published in the *Dublin University Magazine* (November 1875).³³ From his childhood in Ireland, to his university studies (first at Trinity College, Dublin, and then Magdalen College, Oxford), Wilde was fascinated with the language, literature, and myths of ancient Greece. Inspired both by his teacher at Trinity, John Pentland Mahaffy, with whom he traveled to Greece in April 1877, and by books like Symonds' *Studies of the Greek Poets* (1873–6) and Mahaffy's own *Greek Social Life from Homer to Menander* (1874), Wilde would go on to become "one of the most pre-eminent classicists of his generation in England and Ireland."³⁴ Throughout his life he remained an admirer of Aristophanes, and in his own version of the entrance hymn of *Clouds*, he detached the strophe (275–90) and antistrophe (299–313) from their original dramatic context. Although the antistrophe ends "In Bacchanal dance and in pleasure, / 'Mid the contests of sweet singing choirs," only the poem's sub-heading indicates its explicit relationship to the original play. Unlike Rogers, whose clouds are "Ladies divine" (266), "Goddesses" (291), and "Daughters of Mist" (299), Wilde stresses the seductive femininity of the clouds. They are called "Cloud-Maidens," and are presented as eternally young and alluring entities ("Dew-sprinkled, fleet bodies, and fair"). The language is erotic but not obscene; for Wilde, Greece was a pagan arcadia, a sublime world where pines "hang as tresses of hair" and the rivers are "nymph-haunted." It was also a world lost to Wilde's present—an idea touched upon lightly here but one that would be fully developed in poems like "The Theatre at Argos," written

33 "The Chorus of Cloud Maidens" was Wilde's first published poem and composed while he was still an undergraduate (Fong and Beckson (2000) 220). It was later anthologized in *Odes from the Greek Dramatists* (1890), edited by Alfred W. Pollard. In a notebook dating to February 1874, Wilde used an English version of *Plutus* and translated lines 803–18 back into Greek (Ross (2012) 215). For more on Wilde's engagement with Greece, see Sammon (2007) and Mendelsohn (2010).

34 Wright (2010) 48. In a letter from 1893, Wilde demonstrates the great affection he had for Mahaffy: "thank you for the charming letter, all the more flattering to me as it comes not merely from a man of high and distinguished culture, but from one to whom I owe so much personally, from my first and best teacher, from the scholar who showed me how to love Greek things" (Holland and Hart-Davis (2000) 561–2). The first volume of Symonds' *Studies of the Greek Poets* appeared in 1873; the second volume, in 1876. Wilde was so impressed with *Studies* that he cultivated a friendship with Symonds through letter writing (Ellmann (1988) 32–3).

during his 1877 visit to Greece.³⁵ Wilde's translation from *Clouds* is a celebration of nature and reads like a Theocritean idyll:

Στροφή

Cloud-Maidens that float on for ever,
 Dew-sprinkled, fleet bodies, and fair,
 Let us rise from our Sire's loud river,
 Great Ocean, and soar through the air
 To the peaks of the pine-covered mountains where the
 pines hang as tresses of hair.
 Let us seek the watchtowers undaunted,
 Where the well-watered cornfields abound,
 And through murmurs of rivers nymph-haunted
 The songs of the sea-waves resound;
 And the sun in the sky never wearies of spreading his radiance
 around.
 Let us cast off the haze
 Of the mists from our band,
 Till with far-seeing gaze
 We may look on the land.³⁶

All of the translations surveyed thus far were conceived, first and foremost, as textual projects. They were meant to be read (at loud perhaps), as well as studied, but not performed in front of an audience. In fact, before the 1870s, there were hardly any performances of an Aristophanic comedy in Britain or in the United States. However, in the 1880s, university productions of Greek plays commenced at both Oxford (1880) and Cambridge (1882). In November 1883, Cambridge staged *Birds*, with Montague Rhodes James, later the provost of King's College, playing Peithetairos (Peisetaerus), and with Benjamin Hall Kennedy, Regius professor of Greek, serving as the president of the supervising Committee.³⁷ Regarded as “the greatest classical teacher of the century,”

35 See Fong (1979); and Beckson and Fong (1997).

36 Ross contends that this translation is “Swinburnian in vocabulary and metre, and most probably he [Wilde] chose this ode because its subject-matter—air and water, chthonic mystery rituals—made it peculiarly ripe for Swinburnian treatment . . . The metre of the Greek—lyric dactyls—is also very close to Swinburne's characteristic anapaestic trimeter (the metre used by Wilde in ‘Chorus of Cloud-Maidens’)” (Ross (2012) 85).

37 For more on Cambridge productions of Aristophanic comedy, see Marshall (2015) and his essay in this volume.

Kennedy had previously published a verse translation of *Birds* (1874), which originated from his classroom lectures.³⁸ His English text was reprinted alongside the Greek in support of the 1883 production, and he explained that his primary focus as a translator was to adapt the original to contemporary tastes. As such, the parabasis is rendered not with anapests but with internally rhyming trochaics, a meter “more likely to please” (lines 685–9):³⁹

Ho! ye men dim-lived by nature, closest to the leaves in feature,
Feeble beings, clay-create, shadowy doleful tribes inanimate,
Wingless mortals, in a day, doleful, dreamlike, swept away;
Note the lessons that we give, we the immortals form'd to live,
We the ethereal, the unaged, with undying plans engaged.

The Cambridge production of *Birds* also prompted the reprinting of both Frere's translation (of which Kennedy was critical) and Algernon Charles Swinburne's verse translation of the parabasis. Swinburne's “experiment” in anapestic heptameter had previously appeared in *The Athenaeum* (October 1880) and in *Studies in Song* (also 1880). A great admirer of the Greek dramatist, Swinburne describes him in short prefatory remarks as a “half divine humourist in whose incomparable genius the highest qualities of Rabelais were fused and harmonized with the supremest gifts of Shelley.”⁴⁰ To anglicize his genius, Swinburne, much like Wilde before him, detached the parabasis from its original dramatic and lyrical context. His intention in so doing was to lay stress on the metrical dimensions of Aristophanic comedy, “to renew,” as he put it, “as far as possible for English ears the music of this resonant and triumphant metre, which goes ringing at full gallop as of horses who ‘dance as ’twere to the music / Their own hoofs make.’”⁴¹ His conscious use of rhyme (“makeweights for the

38 Venn and Venn (1951) 20.

39 Kennedy (1883) 98. In the appendices to both the 1874 and 1883 editions, Kennedy includes an anapestic version of the parabasis:

Ho ye men who by nature are dim-lived, attend, ye most semblant of all to the leaf-race,
Little furnish'd with strength, and mere figments of clay, shadow-wrought population and
nerveless;

O ye wingless ephemerals, born to endure, O ye men that are mortal and dreamlike,
Unto us the immortals give diligent heed, unto us who are ever existent,
The ethereal dwellers, untouch'd by old age, the devisers of plans never-ending.

40 Swinburne (1880) 68.

41 Swinburne (1880) 68. On this, Swinburne writes, “I would not seem over curious in search of an apt or inapt quotation: but nothing can be fitter than a verse of Shakespeare's to praise at once and to describe the most typical verse of Aristophanes.”

imperfection of an otherwise inadequate language") is consistent with the efforts of previous translators, but Swinburne's approach defies Frere's sweetness, Cary's melody, and Kennedy's agreeability.⁴² Alliteration, feminine rhymes, and repetition build upon each other. His inventive language and syntax ("Lift up your mind unto us that are deathless, and dateless the date of our being") evoke the sublime and underscore the timelessness of the birds. Of all the nineteenth-century English translations of *Birds*, his is most effective in capturing the mock-heroic diction of Aristophanes' grand chorus (lines 685–9):

Come on then, ye dwellers by nature in darkness, and like to the leaves'
generations,
That are little of might, that are moulded of mire, unenduring and
shadowlike nations,
Poor plumeless ephemerals, comfortless mortals, as visions of shadows
fast fleeing,
Lift up your mind unto us that are deathless, and dateless the date of our
being:
Us, children of heaven, us, ageless for aye, us, all of whose thoughts are
eternal.

In nineteenth-century Britain, prose and verse translations of Aristophanes were the means by which most readers and audiences understood Greek comedy, and they were produced at an accelerating rate. From 1880 to 1900, over thirty new English translations appeared; some, like *Kelly's Keys to the Classics*, printed individual plays, while others published only selections. Still others grouped plays in tandem with ancient literature by different writers. In addition, English translations of Aristophanes began to appear with accompanying illustrations. Alfred John Church's *Stories from the Greek* (1892) is one example, but the sixteen illustrations, which are drawn to evoke ancient Greek art, do little to elucidate plot, characters, and action.⁴³ Robert Farren's twelve etchings of the 1883 Cambridge production of *Birds* are drawn in beautiful detail, but missing from them is any representation of obscenity, violence,

⁴² Swinburne (1880) 68.

⁴³ Church was a professor of Latin at University College, London. *Stories from the Greek Comedians* intersperses prose summaries with verse translations of Aristophanes (except for *Lysistrata* and *Thesmophoriazusae*), as well as translations from Philemon, Diphilus, Menander, and Apollodorus.

or sexuality.⁴⁴ Thus, when Aubrey Beardsley's illustrations of *Lysistrata* were first printed privately in 1896, their appearance marked an important moment in the long history and evolution of Aristophanes in the Anglophone world. A daring, playful, and imaginative reader, Beardsley sought to make the Greek playwright modern by visually translating *Lysistrata* for the *fin de siècle*. Refusing euphemism, elision, obfuscation, and abstraction in his illustrations, Beardsley would become what John Addington Symonds once said of Aristophanes himself, a "hierophant for a now unapprehended mystery."⁴⁵

Aubrey Beardsley: Reader, Critic, and Illustrator of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*

Aubrey Beardsley began drawing *Lysistrata* in late April 1896 while ensconced at the appropriately named Spread Eagle Hotel in Epsom. Although enervated by the chronic effects of tuberculosis, a disease that would later take his life, he worked assiduously on *Lysistrata*, and maintained a correspondence with Leonard Smithers, publisher of *The Savoy* and an occasional pornographer.⁴⁶ By July, Beardsley had almost completed his illustrations, telling Smithers, "I am beginning to feel very proud of the *Lysistrata*. I shall ask you for a copy of it after all."⁴⁷ At the same time, he wrote frequently to Marc-André Raffalovich, a spiritual mentor to his *Télémaque*.⁴⁸ Raffalovich expressed enthusiasm for the project, and in mid-August, Beardsley claimed that the illustrations

44 Of Farren's etchings the frontispiece is most worthy of note. It dramatizes a selection from the parabasis (lines 693–700), the cosmogony of the birds. A winged Eros sits on top of a cracked wind egg, out of which marches a theriomorphic band of birds. The bird-men are classically costumed in togas with sandals, and each wears an individualized headpiece. Bird heads, beaks, necks, and plumage are all intricately styled. In all of his illustrations, Farren includes a line of Greek or the names of the characters so that the viewer can link the image to a specific moment in the play.

45 Symonds (1880) 297. This line seems adopted from the closing lines of Shelley's *A Defense of Poetry*.

46 On the influence of Smithers on Beardsley, see Blanshard (2010) 38–9.

47 Beardsley (1970) 147.

48 In his letters, Beardsley often addressed his friend and patron Raffalovich as "Mentor" and signed off as "Télémaque." Raffalovich asked if the illustrations were inspired by the Greek original or by Maurice Donnay's modern adaptation, which was first staged in Paris in 1892. Beardsley replied that they were "for Aristophanes and not Donnay" (Beardsley (1970) 153).

"are in a way the best things I have ever done."⁴⁹ In October 1896, Smithers and his partner, Harry Sidney Nichols, privately printed one hundred copies of *Lysistrata*, a printing that included Beardsley's eight illustrations and an anonymous prose translation now ascribed to Samuel Smith.⁵⁰

As an artist, Beardsley frequently drew inspiration from literary sources, and he was most likely aware of the negative reputation surrounding Aristophanes' "women plays," in particular *Lysistrata*.⁵¹ Although not a member of the university elite, he was an autodidact, who, according to Arthur Symons, the editor of *The Savoy*, "seemed to have read everything, and had his preferences as adroitly in order, as wittily in evidence, as almost any man of letters."⁵² Beardsley was fascinated by subjects that allowed him to explore excess, sexuality, desire, ritual practices, and the grotesque. *Lysistrata*, with its uninhibited mingling of the sexual and the political, suited his tastes and his sense of humor, but since the first printing of his illustrations, they have been studied only as isolated artistic objects without a thorough exploration of the relationships between picture and page, between the sexually charged images and the thematic elements of the original.

Near the end of this life, Beardsley converted to Roman Catholicism, and the obscenity of his illustrations began to haunt him. In one of the last letters he wrote shortly before his death in March 1898, Beardsley implored Smithers, "to destroy *all* copies of *Lysistrata* and bad drawings. Show this to Pollitt and conjure him to do the same. By all that is holy *all* obscene drawings."⁵³ Smithers

49 Beardsley (1970) 150.

50 Nelson reports that "Smithers...initially offered the job of translating to [Ernest Christopher] Dowson, a poet and translator with whom Smithers often contracted], who, as he later wrote, 'funked it'" (Nelson (2000) 149). Samuel Smith (1867–1938), a close friend of Dowson to whom he dedicated "Beata Solitudo," stepped in and provided a serviceable, if occasionally misleading, prose translation.

51 For an analysis of the reputations of Aristophanes' plays, see Walsh (2008) 116–20.

52 Symons (1898) 752. Beardsley's knowledge of literature was impressive: "while a school-boy he made illustrations for Dickens, Swift, Marlowe, Ibsen, Virgil, Congreve, and a little later on for the Abbé Prevost, Dumas *fils*, Daudet, Flaubert, Balzac, Racine, Shelley, Shakespeare, Dante, while his mature work included drawings for Malory, Björnson, Burney, Wilde, Juvenal, Lucian, Dowson, Davidson, Meredith, Poe, Molière, Wycherley, Pope, Catullus, Aristophanes, Gautier, and Ben Jonson" (Gallatin (1945) 105). However, he did not know ancient Greek well, and it is most likely that he read the play in translation (Sturgis (1998) 44).

53 Beardsley (1970) 439. Herbert Charles Jerome Pollitt (1871–1942) was a "sympathique and amusing collector" of Beardsley's work with whom the artist was friendly (Beardsley (1970) 405).

ignored the request; however, the illustrations were still often censored or suppressed until the mid-twentieth century.⁵⁴ After Beardsley's death, critical evaluations of his life and work were diverse. Symons eulogized him as an "*anima naturaliter pagana* . . . No artist of our time, none certainly whose work has been in black and white, has reached a more universal, or a more contested fame."⁵⁵ *The Magazine of Art*, however, issued judgment more typical of the time: "That art like Beardsley's, so excellent in technique and so detestable in spirit, wakes more repugnance than praise—proves us a nation stronger in ethics than in art."⁵⁶ And in an essay first published in the *Athenaeum* (November 1904), Roger Fry, a member of the influential Bloomsbury Group, noted Beardsley's great talent, but labeled him "the Fra Angelico of Satanism."⁵⁷

In recent decades, efforts have been made to understand Beardsley more fully as illustrator, reader, and interpreter of his source authors and texts.⁵⁸ Scholars have primarily focused on the illustrations he did for Wilde's *Salomé* and Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*. Interest in his *Lysistrata* has been more muted, and even curious critics have often misinterpreted the action on display, shying away from the shocking eroticism and failing to reconcile Beardsley's illustrations with the Greek original. Such scholarly ambivalence is strange because Beardsley's work directly engage one of the central interpretive questions of the play: "Who is Lysistrata?"⁵⁹ Modern response to this question has been diverse, but Beardsley, by drawing Lysistrata differently in each illustration in which she is featured, anticipated that diversity with his own ambiguous

54 In *The Later Work of Aubrey Beardsley*, published in London in 1900 (with frequent reprints), the eight *Lysistrata* illustrations appear, but all are highly censored. For example, in *Lysistrata Haranguing the Athenian Women*, a large white box is placed in front of the arms and torsos of the gathered women, thus obscuring their full-frontal nudity. For a publication history of Beardsley's work, see Lasner (1995). In August 1966, British authorities confiscated copies of Beardsley's *Lysistrata* under the Obscene Publications Act of 1959 (Weintraub (1976) 199).

55 Symons (1898) 752.

56 Armour (1896) 12.

57 Fry (1929) 236. For a survey of contemporary critical attitudes towards Beardsley, see Desmarais (1998) 1–29. Even after Beardsley's illustrations of *Lysistrata* became more widely known, they continued to suffer from critics who considered them to be irrelevant and offensive (see Wilton (1969) 48, 49; and Walton (2010) 15).

58 See Gilbert (1982–83), Wallen (1992), Showalter (1992), Schweik (1994), Hefferman (2000), and Frankel (2000) and (2002).

59 See, for instance, Sommerstein (1990) and (2010b), Taaffe (1993), Halliwell (1998a), Faraone (2006), Robson (2009) and (2010), Hall (2010), and Revermann (2010).

variety of poses.⁶⁰ The provocative ambiguity evoked by his Lysistratas unsettle the imagination of both the scholar and common reader.

Lysistrata Shielding her Coynte, the first illustration to appear in Smithers' edition, encapsulates the thematic elements not only of the play but also of the images that follow.⁶¹ The irony of the title immediately provokes the reader to contemplate the nature of action depicted. Lysistrata protects her vagina, but her middle fingers are pursed together like lips—to suggest a depilated χοῖρος.⁶² The details on her diaphanous gown, fantastic and eighteenth-century in style, draw further attention to her mid-section, the seat of her feminine power. Lysistrata is surrounded by representations of male virility. On her right, a satyr-like figure, evocative of a boundary herm, is mounted on a pedestal, whose base and column are decoratively adorned and are themselves sexually suggestive.⁶³ The head of the phallus emits energy in the form of rays, to which Lysistrata's eyes are drawn but by which she is not controlled. On her left is a disembodied phallus, perhaps meant to be construed as a dildo, with a luxurious lion's mane for pubic hair.⁶⁴ Both the satyr and the phallus suggest ancient ritual practices, and their inclusion is consistent with Beardsley's life-long fascination with the ceremonial aspects of religion.⁶⁵ Lysistrata renders the phallus harmless by placidly placing her left hand, in which she also holds an olive branch, on its head, as if she were petting a domesticated animal.

60 This discussion will concentrate on four of the eight illustrations. The others, *The Toilet of Lampito*, *Cinesias Entreating Myrrhina to Coition*, *The Examination of the Herald*, and *The Lacedaemonian Ambassadors*, do not feature Lysistrata.

61 Beardsley's illustrations are not included in this *Companion* but can be easily searched for and viewed online.

62 "Coynte" is vulgar slang, but as an archaic form of "quaint," it can describe something that is cleverly devised or someone who is knowledgeable. If this secondary meaning is understood, Lysistrata shields from view her scheme to have women withhold sex from their husbands. For χοῖρος as a depilated vagina, see Henderson (1991) 131–2).

63 Beardsley's inspiration for this creature may have been Smithers' translation of the *Priapeia* (1888) or modern pornographic novels and illustrations to which he had easy access (Pease (2009) 107). This is possible, but there are alternatives: 1) Beardsley was fascinated with herms (see, for instance, his illustrations of *Le Morte d'Arthur* and *Salomé*); and 2) in including this herm, Beardsley may have been thinking about the mutilation of the herms at Athens in 415 BC. Aristophanes alludes to this scandal at 1082ff., in which a group of Athenian delegates appear on stage, sporting erections under their cloaks. The chorus leader warns them to hide their condition, lest one of the ἐρμωκοπίδαι ("herm-choppers") sees them.

64 Zatlin (1990) 173.

65 See Beckson (1989). Like in ancient fertility rituals or religious practices, the phallus became for Beardsley a symbol of life, death, and rebirth.

Lysistrata is posed languidly with hips slightly thrust out. One breast is fully exposed, while the other winks at the viewer from under her gown. The flowers in her hair suggest the plumage of a male peacock, underscoring her Argus-eyed omniscience. Beardsley draws a meretricious *femme du monde*, a woman of both sexual and political secrets. He further channels the paratragic proclamation that Lysistrata confidently makes to an assembly of Athenian and Spartan men at line 1124: 'Woman though I am, I have wits' (ἐγὼ γυνή μὲν εἰμι, νοῦς δ' ἔνεστί μοι).⁶⁶ In visage, hairstyle, and dress, however, Beardsley's Lysistrata looks more like a modern (British) woman than an Athenian of the fifth century BC. Critics have noted the hours that Beardsley spent studying ancient Greek art, so his choice to depart from expressly classical models—and, crucially, to juxtapose old and new, high and low, proper and improper—is deliberate.⁶⁷ Indeed, the Lysistrata of the title-page can perhaps be best compared to contemporaneous depictions of British women, such as those painted by Peter Lely and Thomas Gainsborough.⁶⁸ As Aristophanes parodied Euripides and other Greek poets in his own time, Beardsley hoped to satirize Britain's rich history of portrait painting. By conscripting gestures, postures, and ornaments potentially familiar to his audience, he adds another layer of interpretation to an already scandalous image. Such was his style: an eclectic artist working in an age that demanded the eclectic and the strange, Beardsley possessed the license to borrow from any and all sources.⁶⁹

Beardsley's reading of Lysistrata continues in the third illustration, *Lysistrata Haranguing the Athenian Women* (inspired by lines 151ff.). He draws her wearing the same clothes as she was in the frontispiece, but this time, instead of facing the viewer, Lysistrata is in profile. Her right hand is raised, and her middle fingers are drawn together in a profane benediction, as if to demonstrate

66 The line comes from Euripides' *Melanippe the Wise* (Henderson (1987) 197). Unless otherwise noted, translations of *Lysistrata* are taken from Samuel Smith's text (1973).

67 Sturgis remarks that "1891 was the year of his artistic education, a period of close study, unwavering commitment and real advance. He visited galleries and exhibitions; he returned again and again to the British Museum and the National Gallery, coming to know their collections with 'extraordinary thoroughness'; he collected prints and illustrated volumes; he read, he thought, and he drew" (Sturgis (1998) 66).

68 Compare, for instance, the body posture and right hand of Beardsley's Lysistrata with Lely's *Diana Kirke, later Countess of Oxford* (c. 1665–70). That Lysistrata strikes a confident pose next to a column may have been inspired by paintings like Gainsborough's *Lady Ligonier* (1770) or *The Honourable Mrs Graham* (1775–77).

69 As Meier-Graefe observes, "In one day he [Beardsley] could be Baroque, Empire, Pre-Raphaelite, or Japanese, and was sometimes all of these together in the same picture. Yet he was always Beardsley" (Meier-Graefe (1908) 255).

how the assembled women must endure the sex strike. Her left hand, which rested on the large phallus in the first illustration, is here tucked into a leg pocket. The hand, however, is obscured from view, perhaps to coyly make private her own masturbation. Noteworthy as well is that the pocket itself, with its detailed design, suggests a vagina. Lysistrata is prominent on the page as she addresses the nude women, all of whom have different physical and cosmetic characteristics. The woman assembled to the right openly mimics Lysistrata's hand gesture as she stretches to masturbate the woman in the center, whose left hand is hidden behind her hips. The viewer cannot discern what she is doing, but she could possibly be returning a sexual favor. Allison Pease has observed a similarity between Beardsley's assembled women and modern erotic photographs, but whatever likeness does exist, the illustration is grounded in the action of the play.⁷⁰ A husky woman, an attractive and richly adorned woman, and a young bonneted wife meet, and Beardsley stresses their solidarity, and that of all women, whether young, old, foreign, or Athenian, feel for their cause. As the powerful "madam" of such a meretricious group, Lysistrata is here a force to be reckoned with.⁷¹

In *Lysistrata Defending the Acropolis*, Beardsley represents lines 370ff., in which the women combat a group of torch-carrying old men trying to storm the gates. One woman, completely naked save a black stocking and garter, calmly pours a chamber pot on an old man with a shriveled phallus pointing straight down. The use of the chamber pot is subtle and humorous, alluding to a complaint at lines 400–2 that the men's cloaks are soaked as though they had urinated in them. The woman's tresses are elegantly bowed and flowered, as is her garter, while her back is elongated and almost equine. The other naked woman is large-bottomed and bent over with a hand on her knee—customarily thought of as a submissive sexual position but here the woman possesses a transgressive power. Her weapon is her flatulence, which she expels with authority. The man holds up in defense a torch, traditionally a symbol of virility, but as he recedes off the page, he seems powerless before her: either piss will douse his flame, or the gas will ignite and blow up in his face.⁷² Meanwhile,

70 Pease (2009) 117.

71 Faraone astutely observes that Lysistrata "alternately or simultaneously dons two quite different roles: the pious priestess of Athena . . . and the clever madam, who knows how to guard the entrance to her brothel, how to throw a lavish feast there, and how to manipulate men and marshal her girls to maximize her profits and influence" (Faraone (2006) 220).

72 Gatrell's study of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century satirical prints demonstrates that Beardsley follows a long tradition of illustrators who utilized scatology to communicate

Lysistrata, who in the original Greek is offstage during this sequence, gazes over the shoulder of the first woman and holds a chamber pot in reserve. Wearing a captain's plume, her right arm muscular and defined, she recalls the character of Athena. She is demurely dressed, and sacred olive branches detail her frock, reminding the viewer of the title-page. However, here her breasts are covered, and she is ἀνδρειοτάτη, "most manly," the superlative used to describe her at lines 549 and 1108. Perhaps to signal the change from Aphrodite to Athena, Beardsley alters the details of her face. This is a curious decision, and while it has led at least one critic to misread the illustration, it underscores the protean quality of Aristophanes' heroine. A character with "many faces," she is a composite drawn from mythology, history, art, and Athenian life.⁷³ She is part priestess, part fighter, part strategist, part seductress; she is, as Smith translates, "fierce and gentle, fine and coarse, quite haughty yet benign" (δεινὴν <μαλακὴν> ἀγαθὴν φαύλην, σεμνὴν ἀγανήν, πολύπειρον—line 1109). With a sharp chin and a sober countenance, the Lysistrata in this illustration guides the action instead of participating in it.

In *Two Athenian Women in Distress*, Beardsley collapses space and time into one illustration. At lines 715ff., Lysistrata complains to the leader of the women's chorus that she is having trouble keeping some women from upholding their oath:

I found the first one picking open the hole where the cave of Pan is; another slipping down by the pulley; another I caught in the very act of deserting; and another one I dragged off a sparrow by the hair yesterday, just as she was ready to fly down to the house of Orsilochus. They are making all manner of excuses to get off home.

Aristophanes' language is sexually suggestive and full of puns. Beardsley inventively captures two "distress" scenes in one illustration, both of which, in Lysistrata's narration, happened in the past. The woman on the right, seemingly an older wife by the shape and size of her bottom, shimmies down a rope from the heights of the Acropolis. A slipper falls from her foot, perhaps

political and social defiance. He finds that "The image of the sexually initiating, predatory, even emasculating woman is common in the satires," and he explores how such images would have been received by men and women: "the male gaze upon the female body was layered and complex rather than single- or simple-minded; and women's responses would have too. What was seen in such satires would depend on the beholder's eye, as it still does" (Gatrell (2006) 381, 386).

73 Hall (2010) 36.

dislodged by the movement of her hips as she masturbates with the rope. (Where the other slipper is, the viewer is left to wonder.) The young woman on the left is perched on a sparrow and masturbates openly, while Lysistrata, identified by the garment she wears in the frontispiece and in *Lysistrata Haranguing the Athenian Women*, reaches out to grab her. Zatlin suggests that the woman is stepping on the bird, but, more precisely, she is riding on the sparrow (ἐπὶ στρούθου—line 723), a bird sacred to Aphrodite and symbolic of the phallus.⁷⁴ As she flies downward to a sexual rendezvous, her frock flows behind her in the wind, allowing the viewer to see what she is doing with her right hand.⁷⁵ Depending on the viewer's knowledge and interests, *Two Athenian Women in Distress* can be read in a variety of ways. For a consumer of pornography, the portrayal of open and furtive masturbation is stimulating; for a reader familiar with classical literature and culture, the text and illustration are complementary, informing and folding back upon each other. Beardsley plays to both audiences by manipulating the dramatic text with which he is presented; he creates an illustration that effectively juxtaposes ancient and modern, the sacred and the profane.⁷⁶

Conclusion

This chapter has endeavored to tell a part of the story of the modern reception of Aristophanes in Britain. During the nineteenth century his plays were finally given sustained and sympathetic attention from translators, who, in many cases, tried to make Aristophanes modern by introducing ancient meters into English or by disrupting established paradigms with respect to how Aristophanic comedy was understood. In order to appreciate recent translations of Aristophanes, it is important to understand the literary-historical context and the range of choices that nineteenth-century translators made.⁷⁷ To employ in translation the language and syntax of Shakespeare assimilates Aristophanic poetry into an English idiom that is both stylized and familiar.

74 See Sommerstein (1990) 194–5; and Elderkin (1940) 393.

75 See Zatlin (1989) 184; and Zatlin (1997) 130–1.

76 In a discussion of J.W. Waterhouse's *Mariamne* (1887), Goldhill argues a similar point: "The painting may be the product of an encounter with a single ancient author, but its reception as a painting—the understanding of the image—takes place through different levels and applications of knowledge, different interplays of generic and detailed narrative expectations" (Goldhill (2011) 51).

77 See, for instance, Baker and Mitchell in this volume.

To compare Aristophanes with Rabelais and Shelley is in itself a way to theorize in practical terms the multidimensionality of the comic plays. To ignore decorum and propriety and to highlight issues of gender and sexuality anticipates our contemporary fascination with *Lysistrata*, traditionally Aristophanes' most maligned play. In creating interpretative bridges—sometimes visible, sometimes not—between ancient and modern, translators of Aristophanes face a unique challenge: they must negotiate his poetry and politics while contending with modernity, with their own moments and places in history. How they resolve ambivalence and represent it in translation has been and will continue to be vital to Aristophanes' modern reception.

Comedy and Tragedy in Agon(y): The 1902 Comedy *Panathenaia* of Andreas Nikoularas¹

Gonda Van Steen

Introduction: Competition is Key

“Όσοι ἐπιθυμεῖτε νὰ φθάσητε μέχρι τῆς ἀρχαιότητος καὶ νὰ ἴδῃτε δι’ ἀσθενοῦς μὲν φακοῦ ἀλλὰ συγχρόνως καὶ μεθ’ ἑλληνικῆς ὑπερηφανείας τὴν μεγάλην τῆς ἀρχαιότητος εὐκλειαν καὶ τὴν χάριν τῶν μεταξὺ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος αἰσθημάτων ἀναγνώσατε τὴν παρούσαν κωμῳδίαν. Θὰ γελάσητε εὐγενῇ καὶ εὐφρόσυνον γέλωτα, πλὴν συγχρόνως καὶ σκεπτικοὶ θὰ φιλοσοφήσητε ἐπὶ τοῦ συγχρόνου βίου.

All of you, read the present comedy, you who desire to reach into antiquity and to see antiquity’s great glory, [be it] through a weak lens but at the same time also with Greek pride; you who long to see the delightful sentiments of divine and human interaction. You will break into a polite and prudent laughter, except that, because you are also skeptical, you will at the same time reflect on contemporary life.²

These words preface the 1902 comedy *Panathenaia* written by the playwright and poet Andreas D. Nikoularas, about whom very little is known. Theater historian Giannes Sideres mentioned this modern Greek comedy only ever so briefly in his *History of Modern Greek Theater, 1794–1944*.³ Nikoularas’ earliest extant publications date to the 1870s and 1880s: his one-act comedy entitled *Τυφλομυρία*

1 I thank Arete Vasileiou for her assistance in locating a copy of Nikoularas’ comedy at the University of Crete, and I am grateful to Philip Walsh for his careful work editing and enriching this paper. Patrick Hadley contributed useful comments and suggestions as well. My readings of the ancient Greek texts of Aristophanes are based on the editions by Jeffrey Henderson (1998–2007) and Nigel Wilson (2007b). All translations from ancient Greek are from Henderson’s five-volume Loeb edition (with occasional slight modifications). All translations from modern Greek are my own, but I acknowledge the generous contributions of Eleni Bozia. I have preserved the polytonic accent system of the modern Greek of the early twentieth century (and a few particularities of Nikoularas’ text).

2 Nikoularas (1902) 5.

3 Sideres (1990) 138.

(*Blind Man's Bluff*) was published in Athens in 1877, and his comic idyll (*H χαϊδεμένη* (*The Favorite*) was issued in 1885.⁴ The year 1890 saw the publication of Nikolaras' comedy on a popular theme: *Ο προικοθήρας* (*The Dowry Hunter*), about the phenomenon of gold-digger grooms. The title of Nikolaras' 1902 play *Panathenaia* conjured up the atmosphere of the Panathenaic Festival of classical Athens, which celebrated the birthday of Athena, the city's patron goddess, and featured poetry and musical competitions as well as athletic games.⁵ But this title bore early twentieth-century connotations as well. A Greek journal by the name of *Panathenaia* was issued from 1900 through 1915. A few years after the publication date of Nikolaras' comedy, the name *Panathenaia* became synonymous with a popular tradition of *epitheoreseis*, that is, annual revue shows. These *Panathenaia* shows (1907–23) set the tone of urban Greek theatrical and musical life for more than fifteen years.⁶ The genre was known to comment on current affairs, albeit mostly in a lighter vein. The 1913 *epitheorese*, for instance, went by the title of *Πολεμικά Παναθήναια* (*Wartime Panathenaia*) and referred to the Balkan Wars of 1912–13, in which the dispute over Macedonia drove the Greek state to reassert its nationalist interests.⁷ This revue was written by Bambes Anninos, Georgios Tsokopoulos, and Polyvios Demetrakopoulos.⁸ Demetrakopoulos, who also went by the French-sounding pseudonym of Pol [Paul] Arcas, was one of Greece's most prolific early twentieth-century authors and free-spirited translators of Aristophanes. This same trio put Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* to comic use at the onset of the First World War, in the *Panathenaia* of 1915. They boldly called their work the *International Panathenaia of 1915*, and it starred versatile female characters resembling Aristophanic heroines. The fictional women of 1915 who call for worldwide peace resort to Lysistrata's old weapon of a sex strike.⁹ They ignore the war's real drama and abuse the crisis

4 Chatzepantazes and Maraka (1981) offer an insightful introduction to the modern Greek folk idyll (in the so-called ethnographic tradition).

5 The collective volume edited by Neils (1996) discusses the ancient Panathenaia from various religious, historical, and archaeological angles, whereas Nagy (2002b) sheds further light on the festival's components of poetry, music, and song. See also Shear (2001); and Sourvinou-Inwood (2011) 263–311.

6 Chatzepantazes and Maraka (1977) study and illustrate this popular urban genre, which intersected with the Greek reception history of Aristophanes. See Van Steen (2000) 108.

7 Lila Maraka (2000) edited and published the script of the 1913 *Wartime Panathenaia* in the second volume of her collection of texts representative of the Athenian *epitheorese*.

8 On Demetrakopoulos, see Van Steen (2000) 102–6; and *passim* (2002) and (2013).

9 Robson (2009) offers a recent introduction to the complex art of Aristophanes. For more background on the eighteenth and nineteenth-century reception of Aristophanes in modern Greece, see Van Steen (2000) 16–75.

as a pretext for teasing and taunting their men.¹⁰ Nikolaras' 1902 comedy and the other Aristophanizing plays with which it shared the name *Panathenaia* gave voice to some of the best and the worst of the turn-of-the-century spectacle culture of the Athenian Belle Époque, an era that was, unlike its model in Western Europe, *not* cut off by the onset of the First World War, but was somewhat artificially continued until Greece entered the military fray in 1917.

Other names, dates, and facts play a role, too, when trying to contextualize Nikolaras' *Panathenaia* and its comic source material. The 1902 play pivots on the theme of competition, which is a topic that drives not only *Frogs* (405 BC) but also several other plays of Aristophanes. Of course, the City Dionysia, the grand festivals at which the annual selections of comedies and tragedies were presented in fifth-century BC Athens, were highly competitive. Aristophanes, too, displayed a profound knowledge of his rivals, their strengths, and their (exaggerated) weaknesses.¹¹ Nikolaras saw the rise of several rivals in addition to Demetrakopoulos: the satirist and pundit Georgios Soures, for instance, delivered a risqué version of Aristophanes' *Clouds* in 1900 that remained popular for many years, in Athens and beyond.¹² Nikolaras' theme of competition, however, is multi-faceted. It reconnects with one of the central premises of Aristophanes' *Frogs* when it weighs playwrights against each other and engages the tragic genre and even the bravado culture of bodily strength (or the lack of manly prowess in the opening scenes between Dionysus and his slave Xanthias). The 1902 *agon* presents Aristophanes and Sophocles, comedy and tragedy's respective incarnations, in competition with each other. The number of Greek playwrights and stage directors of revival tragedy of the turn of the century was small, but they had the advantage of being well-established and could endow tragedy with the kind of public prestige that comedy had yet to see. Georgios Mistriotes, for one, was a conservative classics professor from the University of Athens who turned stage director with a predilection for Sophocles. He subjected *Antigone* and other plays to amateur productions in ancient Greek and to the spurious ambitions of philological and archaeo-logical "faithfulness." To reclaim Sophocles and classical theater, Mistriotes had founded the Society for the Staging of Ancient Greek Drama, which was active

10 Van Steen (2013) quotes an excerpt of the women's song, taken from Demetrakopoulos, Anninos, and Tsokopoulos (1915) 21–2 (Van Steen (2013) 759–61).

11 See further Bakola (2010), Biles (2011), and Zuckerberg in this volume.

12 For an analysis of Soures' *Clouds* of 1900, see Van Steen (2000) 91–102. On Soures as a playwright and satirist, see Bakonikola-Georgopoulou (2000b) and (2007) 209–16; and Papaioannou (1986) 49–56. See also Chatzепantazes (2004) 198–200; and Giannakopoulou (2015) 92–4, 96–7, 99.

from December 1895 until 1906.¹³ The Society's 1896 *Antigone* was far from successful, but some critics nonetheless appreciated the effort of the student-amateurs. Mistriotes' work marked a decade of protectionist theater activity which laid exclusive claims to presenting "patriotic" drama in the name of the inherited Hellenic civilization and the legacy of the ancient Greek language. In fact, he was one of the last and most tenacious defenders of the linguistic ideal that rejected modern Greek translations (in any register) of ancient Greek texts, and he sported an absolutist sense of the didactic and cultural mission of such a language policy. Non-translation of classical plays, however, meant limited dissemination and narrowed the potential for viable stage production.

Other contemporary Greek directors such Konstantinos Chrestomanos and Thomas Oikonomou made bolder and more effective attempts to revive classical tragedy. Chrestomanos was a prose author and playwright, aesthete and romantic, who had spent many years working in the service of Empress Elizabeth of Austria. Upon his return to Athens, he founded the Nea Skene, the New Stage Company (1901–6), which began its career in ancient drama with a promising production of Euripides' *Alcestis*, followed by Sophocles' *Antigone*. Like its rival, the more conservative Royal Theater, the New Stage Company helped render early twentieth-century Greek drama more professional. In 1903, however, the Royal Theater's director Oikonomou became the focus of a nationwide controversy when incidents surrounding his prestigious production of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* turned into street riots claiming casualties. Oikonomou had chosen to present his unique premiere of Aeschylus' trilogy in a prose adaptation in the formal Katharevousa language, but, following the translation provided by the classical archaeologist Georgios Soteriades, he allowed for many Demotic touches and occasional trite expressions. The director's "all too liberal" choice and its success enraged the reactionary Mistriotes, whose students had grown increasingly frustrated with the rise of tragic revival productions in the "unworthy" idiom of the Demotic language or of a "contaminated" Katharevousa. The sharpening divisions between modernists and classicists or classicizers came to a head in the bloody clashes between the conservative students and the Athens police trying to protect enthusiastic spectators. These 1903 clashes, to which the name of *Oresteika* remained attached, have, unfortunately, gone down in history as a narrowly national issue, as nationalist rows symptomatic of the linguistic fanaticism that fueled the Greek Language Question. The Christian Scriptures and pagan classical tragedy were the two main objects of contestation between progressive, demoticizing translation and linguistic dogma, and they were conjoined as victims beset by a common

13 Sideres (1976) 113–6, 125.

enemy. The year 1901 had seen the *Euangeli(a)ka*, the violent Gospel Riots, or the protests staged against the Demotic translation of the New Testament published by Alexandros Palles.¹⁴ The language of Nikolaras' 1902 *Panathenaia* is a confident vernacular Greek idiom. It testifies to the fact that modern Greek comedy and also the earliest revivals of Aristophanes' plays could more easily implement progressive linguistic choices.¹⁵

Nikolaras keeps his adaptation of Aristophanes' *Frogs* free and liberal, in order for it to accommodate flexibly the contemporary challenges to the artistic conventions and autonomy of comedy. The years around the turn to the twentieth century reveal a fascination with the quick upmarch of Demotic satire and popular comedy, and the 1902 play was not an exception.¹⁶ Both genres constituted entertainment options that conversed with French models while shaping an urban Greek public.¹⁷ A more daunting competitor to theater, however, was the spectacle of sports, which was all the rage in the early 1900s. Nikolaras' comedy opposes theater performance to sporting spectacle, and he thereby taps into the talk of the town. After the 1896 inauguration of the first modern Olympics in Athens (commonly referred to in Greek as the *Agones*) and following the 1900 Games in Paris, discussion was ongoing as to where

14 See further Van Steen (2008). For an analysis of the complex Language Question (*Glossiko Zetema*), see Beaton (1999) 296–365; and Horrocks (1997) 344–8. The Language Question, or the decades-long struggle to determine a national language, was perhaps the most poignant expression of the uncertainty about modern Greek identity. The nineteenth-century Greek intelligentsia advanced the artificially reconstructed register of the Katharevousa over the vernacular (even though there were many shades to the Demotike, including literary and other written forms), in order to address the ideological needs of the nation-building project, with its many stakes vested in historical continuity and pure lineage. In the largely uncharted domain of state-subsidized revival tragedy of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, this question boiled down to the director's—or the institution's—choice between delivering the text in the original ancient Greek or using a translation in Katharevousa, by then the official idiom of the state, the bureaucracy, and formal education. Both the choices of ancient Greek and Katharevousa, however, were far from presenting viable theatrical options. An academic shift to the study of broader issues of Greek national identity, of which performance, translation, and language remain constitutive elements, has been long overdue. See recently, however, Mackridge (2009).

15 See further Van Steen (2000) 43–4.

16 Nineteenth-century Greek satire intersected with the genres of comedy and the revue and also with the subject matter of Attic comedy. For more on Aristophanes and his influence on the nineteenth-century Greek satirical press, see Chatzепantazes (2004) 163–82; and Van Steen (2000) 52–4, 92–4.

17 For more on the genre of the short entertainment comedy in prose, adopted by Nikolaras, see Chatzепantazes (2004) 106–8, 143.

the Games would be held subsequently. St Louis, Missouri, was soon given the go-ahead to prepare for the third Games in the sequence of international Olympics, to be held in 1904. Originally, the Greeks had hoped to make Athens the permanent site for the international Games, but Pierre de Coubertin had the Games moved to Paris and then ceded to the wishes of American sporting powers. Under pressure of the Greeks, however, the International Olympic Committee agreed in 1901 to hold the first so-called Intercalated or Intercalary Olympic Games in Athens again. These intermediary Games, intended to honor the Greek capital's leading role in reviving the Olympics, did not take place in the end. By the time decisions were finalized, the year 1902 was around the corner, which did not leave enough time for Athens to prepare for the first Intercalated Games. But the Greeks still expected the 1901 agreement to hold, and the next set of Intercalated Games was scheduled for and actually held in Athens in 1906. This (untenable) system of Games held locally and in between the internationally organized Olympics was then discontinued.¹⁸ Significantly, however, the Athenians of 1902 were keenly focused on sporting contests to come, and their city remained at the center of the discussions, even as it was plagued by social problems and financial woes. Rapidly urbanizing Athens had started to explore the landscape of modernism, even though the terrain ahead proved to be unfamiliar and uneven.¹⁹ Nikolaras' fictitious character of

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- 18 For a full, authoritative account of the Olympics of the early 1900s, see Young (1996) 161–6.
- 19 Matthiopoulos (2005) offers a more comprehensive picture of life in Athens in the 1890s through 1900s. From the perspective of the urban sociologist, Giannakopoulou stresses the concept of Athens' metropolitan modernity and the special demands it placed on the new capital city in earlier decades of the nineteenth century (Giannakopoulou (2015) 75–8). Gallant outlines Greek social trends and divisions, urban lifestyles, and nascent feminism of the same decades (Gallant (2015) 212–9, 303–4). Chasape-Christodoulou (2012) centers on modernist trends in Greek theater of the 1900s through 1931. So does Papazoglou (2014) when she lets modern Greek literary and theater critics of those decades speak and add their voices to the broader debate of moderns versus ancients. In January of 1904, a disenchanted Isadora Duncan left Greece after a one-year-long stay, during which she saw the *Oresteia* riots. See Duncan (1955) 133–4; and also Seiragakis (2013) 22. Nikolaras, however, did not show any particular interest in the dance paradigms launched by Duncan at the time of his own writing: while discussing choral song and dance in a competitive framework, the 1902 comedy leaves no room for a separate chorus in imitation of Aristophanes' vital and often highly lyrical choruses. Seiragakis (2013) insightfully situates the 1904 Athenian production of Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae*, staged by Konstantinos Chrestomanos, in its larger cultural context, with emphasis on contemporary developments in music and choreography and their blending of Wagnerian elements and urban Greek folk traditions. After expounding on his views on ancient drama and classical culture in a 1901 manifesto, Chrestomanos had been making waves

Pentathlos, whom his fellow Athenians revere as if he were a demigod, embodies the city's enthrallment with athletic valor.

A "Panathenaic" Comedy in Three Acts

Nikoularas' *Panathenaia* is set in Athens in the fifth century BC, κατά τὴν ἀκμὴν τῆς καλλιτεχνίας ἐν τῇ ἀρχαιότητι ("during the heyday of the arts in antiquity").²⁰ The comedy's cast list is long: with no less than twenty-one characters and a number of extras (Athenian citizens), the play is well-populated, and many of its scenes feature more than three characters. The key figures, however, are the rich *choregos* Kephalos; the victorious Athenian athlete Pentathlos; the god Hermes, a character in Aristophanes' *Peace* and *Wealth*; Sophocles the tragedian; Aristophanes the comic playwright; Kallinikos, Askias, and Kinyras, three artists entirely vested in their occupation of tragic poet/actor, chorus dancer, and singer, respectively; Trygaeus the tavern-keeper (loosely modeled after the lead character of Aristophanes' *Peace*); Arsinoe, the fiancée of Pentathlos; the goddess Athena; and the Muses Melpomene (originally personifying the art of singing and hence the Muse of Tragedy) and Thalia (the Muse of Comedy). Several more female figures fulfill roles ranging from star-struck admirers to love interests of Pentathlos. The minor characters play a relatively large part in the comedy's first two acts, whereas the better known figures such as Sophocles, Aristophanes, Athena, Melpomene, and Thalia dominate Act Three.

Act One and Two of the *Panathenaia* set a festive atmosphere, befitting the Panathenaic Festivals of classical Athens. The subtitle of Act One, Θεὸς διασκεδάζων ("A God Having a Good Time"), refers to Hermes, who soon turns the play into a comedy of errors, by appearing as the athlete Pentathlos mingling with other mortals.²¹ The act's eight scenes follow in quick succession. At the end of one of the festival days, four male friends meet on the road, and, as they are drinking wine, they banter about and sing the praises of Dionysus, the god of wine and the theater. When they notice the throngs of people hurrying to the house of Kephalos, the generous *choregos* who has emerged successful

in Athens, and his modernist interpretations of both classical tragedy and comedy were much talked about in the capital's intellectual circles. The director's work with the Nea Skene, or New Stage, however, was short-lived. By the time the company disbanded in 1906, the critics' attention had turned elsewhere, but Chrestomanos's influence proved to be more enduring in the long run. See further Seiragakis (2013) 31; and Van Steen (2000) 102–3, 115.

20 Nikoularas (1902) 6.

21 Nikoularas (1902) 7.

in the most recent drama competitions, they, too, decide to go and congratulate the winner. Kephalos comes out to greet the well-wishers, and he graciously attributes his victory to Kallinikos, Askias, and Kinyras, or to the tragic poet/actor, chorus dancer, and singer, respectively. But his mind is already on the next contest, the pentathlon, and he goes looking for the renowned Pentathlos, after whom the contest has been named. No sooner do the citizens depart than Hermes appears. Zeus has sent him down to earth to stir trouble among the Athenians, who, he complains, have become too preoccupied with athletic contests, theater performances, and festivities in general. Variants of this theme occur in several of Aristophanes' comedies (*Clouds*, *Peace*, *Birds*, and *Wealth*).²² The gods have been neglected by the Athenians, who do not

- 22 One example from each of the four plays mentioned may suffice to clarify this point. In *Clouds* 607–26, the chorus leader engages in a sustained reference to ominous eclipses, stated proofs of cosmic or divine displeasure, and to the Athenians' lax—or, in reality, challenged—use of the lunar calendar. The chorus had responded to an earlier mention of a lunar eclipse with an invocation of Apollo, the sun-god (*Clouds* 595–6), suggesting complicity between moon and sun. The chorus leader delivers a comic rationale on the moon's behalf, explaining why “she” is angrily withholding her light from the Athenians:

ήνιχ' ήμείς δεῦρ' άφορμάσθαι παρεσκευάσμεθα,
ή Σελήνη ξυντυχοῦσ' ήμίν έπέστειλεν φράσαι
πρώτα μέν χαίρειν Άθηναίοισι καί τοίς ξυμμάχοις·
είτα θυμαίνειν έφασκε. δεινά γάρ πεπονθέναι
ώφελούσ' ήμάς άπαντας ού λόγοις άλλ' έμφανώς

...

άλλα τ' εὔδραν φησίν, ήμάς δ' ούκ άγειν τάς ήμέρας
ούδέν όρθώς, άλλ' άνω τε καί κάτω κυδοιδοπάν...

When we [the chorus of clouds] were ready to set forth on our trip here, the Moon happened to run into us and told us first to say hello to the Athenians and their allies, but then she expressed her annoyance at the awful way she has been treated, after helping you all not with mere talk but with plain action.

...

She says that though she does you other favors too, you don't keep track of your dates correctly, but scramble them topsy-turvy...

(*Clouds* 607–11, 615–6; trans. Henderson).

Upon Trygaeus' arrival on Mount Olympus, it is Hermes who answers the door (*Peace* 177–80). Trygaeus learns that Zeus and the other gods are not at home, where he expected to find them: disgusted with the bellicose Greeks, the Olympians have removed themselves far from the mortals' fighting and praying (*Peace* 204–12).

In *Birds* 1514–24, Prometheus furtively reports on the Olympians' sense of threat and despair at the neglect that they have been suffering from the Greeks. Pisthetaerus and the birds have been preoccupied with defending their new city in the air and have prevented sacrificial smoke from reaching the heavens.

even fear Zeus' lightning bolts any longer. The fault lies with the philosophers and Aristophanes, who disclose the workings of natural phenomena and demystify the Olympians' role (echoes of *Clouds*).²³ Hermes has transformed himself into another Pentathlos to better carry out his punitive mission, and, in this guise, he meets various female fans and love interests of the athlete (scenes 4–6). The god appears to all of Pentathlos' flames and to his fiancée without revealing his true identity. This repeated scenario is reminiscent of the plots of Greek New Comedy and also of Plautus' *Amphitryon*, named after the husband of Alcmena, whom Jupiter seduces pretending to be her spouse. As a pseudo-Pentathlos, however, Hermes is also cornered by the elderly and possessive Glauke, whose advances he rejects. By the end of Act One, Hermes/Pentathlos heads out to the athletic contests.

Lastly, *Wealth* 1099–1123 features Hermes once more: he complains to the slave Cario that the Athenians have been ignoring the gods, which has provoked the anger of Zeus:

ΕΡΜΗΣ ὁ Ζεὺς, ὦ πόνηρε, βούλεται
 εἰς ταῦτόν ὑμᾶς συγκυκίσας τρύβλιον
 ἀπαξάπαντας εἰς τὸ βάραθρον ἐμβαλεῖν.
 ΚΑΡΙΩΝ ἡ γλῶττα τῷ κήρυκι τούτων τέμνεται.
 ἀτὰρ διὰ τί δὴ ταῦτ' ἐπιβουλεύει ποιεῖν
 ἡμᾶς;
 ΕΡΜΗΣ ὅτι ἡ δεινότατα πάντων πραγμάτων
 εἴργασθ'. ἀφ' οὗ γὰρ ἤρξατ' ἐξ ἀρχῆς βλέπειν
 ὁ Πλούτος, οὐδεὶς οὐ λιβανωτόν, οὐ δάφνην,
 οὐ ψαιστόν, οὐχ ἱερεῖον, οὐκ ἄλλ' οὐδὲ ἓν
 ἡμῖν ἔτι θύει τοῖς θεοῖς.

HERMES It's Zeus, you rascal: he's ready to mash up every last one of you in the same bowl and toss you into the executioner's pit!

CARIO For this news the tongue gets sliced for the Herald. But what's his reason for wanting to do that to us?

HERMES Because you've committed the most terrible deeds. Ever since Wealth recovered his original sight, no one has offered us gods any sort of sacrifice: no incense, no bay, no barley cake, no victim, not a single thing.

(*Wealth* 1107–16; trans. Henderson).

- 23 Of all memorable scenes starring Socrates in *Clouds*, the philosopher's "airwalk" and inspection of the sun (*Clouds* 225) are most worthy of mention. Through the practices and statements of his comic hero, Aristophanes himself, too, can be said to have disclosed the workings of the celestial phenomena and to have debunked the prestige of the Olympians. Early on in the play, Socrates defiantly asks, ποίους θεοὺς ὁμεῖ σὺ; "What do you mean, you'll swear by the gods?," claiming that θεοὶ ἡμῖν νόμισμ' οὐκ ἔστι, "gods aren't legal tender here" (*Clouds* 247; trans. Henderson). Next, he is seen praying to the clouds (lines 269–74). Statements by Socrates questioning the existence of the Olympians reoccur throughout the play, and they are increasingly shared by the rest of the comedy's characters.

In the first act, Nikolaras has unabashedly fused elements from classical comedy at large with particulars from the respective traditions of Aristophanes, Menander, and the Roman comic playwrights.²⁴ He has seasoned this blend with touches of the modern comedy of manners and of the mythological parodies-operettas of Jacques Offenbach—such as his tremendously popular *La belle Hélène* (*The Beautiful Helen* [of Troy], 1864), in which the themes of disguise, deception, and seduction drive the stage action. Like the libretti of Offenbach, Nikolaras' play, too, overlays components of classical antiquity with a contemporary veneer; the anachronistic context further demythologizes some of the loftiest characters of the ancient pantheon of gods and men of letters.²⁵ At times, early twentieth-century concerns clash with the classical settings; at other times, ancient exigencies mimic those of Athens in 1902. But the vein of humor that runs most deeply through Nikolaras' comedy is the one drawn from Aristophanes: the scene that has Hermes/Pentathlos trying to escape from the lecherous Glauke, in the presence of two amorous and competing young women, shows how the modern playwright returns to the oldest and most striking example of such a (dis)entanglement, Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae* (lines 877–1111), in which three older women compete for one young man. The following quotation from the 1902 comedy proves just how carefully Nikolaras has been reading Aristophanes:

ΕΡΜΗΣ

Ποιά εἶσαι, σύ,
γραῖα Ἑκάβη!

...

σύ, ἀγάπη εἶσαι μακαρίτισσα!

...

Πάει, πέταξε
τ' ἀηδόνι τῆς ἀγάπης· θέλει ἄνοιξιν
νὰ κελαϊδήσῃ, ὅχι βαρυχειμωνιάν

ΛΥΣΙΠΟΡΙΠΗ

Δὲν ἔχει δόντια, ἔχει τοῦτο τὸ καλόν.

24 Braden (2010) and Telò (2010a) address the classical tradition of Aristophanes and Menander, respectively.

25 Van Steen notes Offenbach's popularity in Greece in the later decades of the nineteenth century (Van Steen (2013) 749). Munteanu discusses the impact of the use of classical texts as well as ancient myths by the librettists who collaborated with Offenbach, reiterating that "Offenbach's librettists managed to create burlesque versions of classical myth using two main techniques: (a) the mixture of times and (b) the degradation of heroism" (Munteanu (2012) 90). On forms of the burlesque, see further Miola (2010a) 220–1.

ΛΕΥΚΗ

Ἄλλ' ὅμως ἔχει νύχια κ' εἶναι τὸ αὐτό.

...

ΛΥΣΙΠΟΡΙΠΗ

Ὁ Πένταθλος δὲν εἶναι γιὰ τὰ δόντια σου.

Ἐκεῖνα, Γλαύκη, ποῦ δὲν ἔχεις δηλαδή.

ΛΕΥΚΗ

Σύ, τώρα πρέπει νὰ γλυκοσαλιάζεσαι,
μονάχα μὲ τὸ χάρο, ποῦ σέ τριγυρνᾷ.

...

ΛΥΣΙΠΟΡΙΠΗ

Σὲ περιμένει, τρέχουν, λές, τὰ σάλια του,
τοῦ χάρου, ποῦ σέ βλέπει· σ' ἐρωτεύθηκε.

ΛΕΥΚΗ

Δὲν τοῦ γλυτόνεις, Γλαύκη, ποῦ θε νὰ τοῦ πᾶς.

ΛΥΣΙΠΟΡΙΠΗ

Ὁ χάρων σὲ προσμένει μὲ τ' ἀκάτιον,
τοῦ Πλούτωνος νὰ ἴδῃς τὰ βασίλεια!

...

ΛΥΣΙΠΟΡΙΠΗ καὶ ΛΕΥΚΗ (Σύρουσαι τὸν Ἑρμῆν).

Ἐλθὲ μαζύ μας εἰς τὸν οἶκον, Πένταθλε!

ΕΡΜΗΣ

Ἐχω ἀγῶνα σήμερον, μὴ σπεύδητε!²⁶

HERMES (to Glauke)

Who are you,
old Hecuba!

...

You, my dear, God rest your soul!

...

It's gone, the nightingale of love
has flown off: for it to sing,
it must be spring, not heavy winter.

LYSIPORPE (about Glauke)

She has no teeth, that's one good thing.

LEUKE

But she has fingernails, which comes down to the same.

...

LYSIPORPE (to Glauke)

Pentathlos is not for you to sink your teeth in,
That is, Glauke, the teeth you no longer have.²⁷

LEUKE

You, you must now bill and coo
only with Charon, who is hovering around you.

...

LYSIPORPE

Charon is waiting for you. Rather, he's salivating
just looking at you: he has fallen in love with you.

LEUKE

You cannot escape him, Glauke, no matter where you turn.

LYSIPORPE

Charon is waiting for you with his boat,
for you to go and see the kingdom of Pluto!²⁸

...

LYSIPORPE and LEUKE (Pulling at Hermes)

Come with us into the house, Pentathlos!

HERMES

I am competing today, no rush!

In the ninth scene of Act Two, Nikolaras adds an unexpected twist to this earlier encounter with the ugly but well-to-do Glauke. Like a modern gigolo, Pentathlos has had some erotic dealings with Glauke, and he continues to expect payment for his "services."²⁹ When he confronts Glauke, she becomes

27 The toothless Glauke, whom the young women try to stop from "devouring" Hermes/Pentathlos, recalls the bogey-woman Empusa, who nearly consumes the young man of *Ecclesiazusae* 1056. The hideous Empusa also terrifies Dionysus in *Frogs* 293.

28 Verbal allusions to the near-death status of the older women of the closing scenes of Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae* are frequent (lines 905, 926, 1035, 1073). Aristophanes' young woman also insists that an old woman is only good enough for an old lover (*Ecclesiazusae* 932). Nikolaras presents Charon as the lover who will elope with the older woman to . . . Hades.

29 Aristophanes does not elaborate on his hint of a hypothetical exchange of (tax) money for male sexual services in *Ecclesiazusae* 1006–7. Even though the young woman and also the first older woman to appear in the ancient comedy are both female prostitutes, monetary payment is not foremost on their mind. Nikolaras presents Lysiporpe as an easily bedazzled female fan of Pentathlos, but her name, "the one who loosens her buckle," might be suggestive of more intimate encounters. Also, the word *πόρπη*, "buckle" or "clasp," is a near-homonym of *πόρνη*, "whore."

irate, because she has just been humiliated and rejected by Hermes/Pentathlos, who was unaware of her “legitimate” claim to her young lover. Thus, Nikolaras boldly diverts from his ancient model, adding new levels of incongruity and intrigue meant to grab attention. The modern playwright also raises the levels of suspense by letting his public wonder whether the young women will catch on. These accretions of action-filled plot and dramatic irony bring the 1902 comedy closer to the (French) revue themes of romantic intrigue and betrayal.

Act Two consists of a dozen scenes and is subtitled Τὸ συμπόσιον (“The Symposium”).³⁰ Enter Trygaeus the tavern-owner, who starts giving orders to his servants (as in the opening of Aristophanes’ *Peace*). He expects the victorious Pentathlos to come over and to give his laurel wreath to his daughter Arsinoe. The real Pentathlos arrives, hands over his wreath to his fiancée as a token of his commitment, and takes off again. When Hermes/Pentathlos arrives shortly thereafter, he confounds the others who assume he was just with them. Kephalos then invites everyone over to his house. There the party-goers engage in a sequence of toasts, and the first one honors Pentathlos. Kallinikos, however, calls attention to the hard work of the tragic actor and promptly receives his well-wishes. Hermes/Pentathlos asks the company next to drink to the health of the singer Kinyras and then to the dancer Askias. Tension rises when Kallinikos and Kinyras take offense at being compared to a dancer and start arguing whether more admiration should be bestowed upon the tragic acting of the former or on the singing of the latter. When the two disgruntled men turn on Pentathlos, unaware of his real identity (Hermes), the indignant athlete (god) counters by boasting about his muscle power. Askias tells them all to stop bickering and names his own dancing as the greatest achievement. The brawl only deteriorates, despite the host’s call for order. Kephalos then proposes that they go and fetch Sophocles and Aristophanes in the Theater of Dionysus nearby and ask the two experts to decide on the matters under dispute. Kallinikos, Kinyras, and Askias serve as stand-ins for their artistic skills, and, similarly, the two playwrights represent the tragic and the comic genre. Using the three artists as thinly disguised foils, Nikolaras’ second act pits the typical components of classical tragedy against each other. It also questions the value of tragedy as a genre before the appeal of athletic capabilities. Notably, Aristophanes himself has been called in as a character and judge, even though the play has not yet begun to compare tragedy and comedy. Nonetheless, the dispute and imminent *agon* (*agones*) have become more and more reminiscent of the latter half and especially of the judgment scene of Aristophanes’ *Frogs*.

30 Nikolaras (1902) 35.

Act Three consists of seven scenes and is subtitled 'Ο ἀπὸ μηχανῆς θεός ('The *Deus ex machina*').³¹ The first scene, set in a stoa near the Theater of Dionysus, presents Sophocles and Aristophanes in conversation. When Kephalos, Pentathlos, and the others catch up with them, they explain that they have been arguing about the preeminence of various art forms and are now seeking the poets' judgment. Aristophanes and Sophocles only hesitatingly accept. Kallinikos flatters Sophocles by calling him an ideal evaluator. His brief statement reveals how Sophocles' tragedy was being read and received in early twentieth-century Greece:

Σύ, εἰς τὸ δράμα τιμωρεῖς τὸ ἔγκλημα,
καὶ ἀνυψῶνεις λάμπουσιν τὴν ἀρετὴν,
μέχρι τῶν ἀθανάτων εἰς τὸν Ὀλυμπόν!³²

You [Sophocles], in your drama you punish crime
and you uphold virtue as a shining example,
even to the immortals on Olympus!

This morality-driven assessment prepares for the goddess Athena's pronouncement about the nature and function of tragedy in general (87, quoted below). Kinyras concurs and reiterates the punitive tendency of Sophoclean tragedy:

Σύ, ὅστις φέρεις πάντοτ' ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς,
ἀστράπτουσιν τὴν σπάθην τῆς Νεμέσεως,
καὶ ῥίπτομένους τοῦ Διὸς τοὺς κεραυνοὺς
κατὰ τῶν ἀνοσίων . . . σύ,
ὀφείλεις νᾶ μᾶς κρίνῃς!³³

You [Sophocles], you bring to the stage
the flashing sword of Nemesis
and the thunderbolts thrown by Zeus
against the impious . . . You,
you must judge us!

The reluctant Aristophanes tries to dodge the thorny responsibility, claiming that comedy—and therefore he as a comic playwright—has no business

31 Nikolaras (1902) 69.

32 Nikolaras (1902) 73.

33 Nikolaras (1902) 73.

intervening in matters of tragedy. He delegates the task to Sophocles alone, who will have to weigh the arts of Kallinikos, Kinyras, and Askias, or to declare his preference for sports. Tragic acting, singing, and dancing are in competition with athletic prowess or with less lofty forms of muscle power. Along with the charged debate, the standoff between the real Pentathlos and the imposter Hermes continues, until Sophocles unmasks the latter. On second thought, Aristophanes claims that, for being a comedian, he must have the better judgment, but Kallinikos and Sophocles are quick to contest his claim, and they call tragedy superior—a statement with which the comic playwright promptly takes issue. Thus, the *agon* covers the comparison between the dramatic arts and sports, the challenge of distinguishing the real from the fake Pentathlos, and the judgment call of whether tragedy is more prestigious than comedy. This *agon* may present a more modern content, but it is by no means more elaborate than the *agon* of Aristophanes' *Frogs*. Sophocles voices his opinion in a curt and defensive manner:

Ὁ κωμῶδὸς Ἀριστοφάνης ποιητής,
τὴν τέχνην ὑποθέτει τὴν δραματικὴν,
ν' ἀναβιβάσω θέλω ὑψηλότερον,
διότι, ὅπως λέγει, εἶπον τραγικά.
Ἄλλ' ὅμως οὐδὲν τούτου ἀληθέστερον!
Ἡ τραγωδία προεξάρχει κ' ἔπεται
ἢ κωμῶδία³⁴

Aristophanes the comic poet
posits that I want to raise
the dramatic art to a higher level,
because, as he says, I speak in the tragic vein.
But, to be sure, nothing is more true than that!
Tragedy takes primacy and comedy
follows

Aristophanes retorts while maintaining the personal tone that the *agon* has now assumed (as in Aristophanes' *Frogs*):

Ἡ κωμῶδία προεξάρχει γνώριζε
κ' εἰς κρίσεις παραλόγους παύσαι προχωρῶν,
πρὶν ἢ σὲ κάμω κωμῶδίας ἤρωα.³⁵

34 Nikolaras (1902) 80–1.

35 Nikolaras (1902) 81.

Comedy takes primacy, you better realize,
and don't proceed to absurd judgments,
or else I make you the hero [butt] of a comedy.

Sophocles calls his Muse Melpomene to the rescue, but Thalia, the Muse of Comedy, follows close on her heels to come to Aristophanes' defense. The two Muses bicker and even threaten each other, until Athena makes her appearance as a *dea ex machina* amid thunder and lightning. At first sight, Athena's presence is not an adequate substitute for appearances by Aeschylus and Euripides, which the reader with knowledge of Aristophanes' *Frogs* might anticipate. The goddess is, however, the unmistakable name-sake of the Panathenaia Festival and thus of this play. Moreover, her name conjures up the dramatic settings of trial and judgment, of justice, vengeance as justice, and (reconciliation after deeds of) revenge, as illustrated in plays by all three of the tragedians.³⁶ Athena instantly tells Sophocles and Aristophanes to stop quarreling. Next, the intensely political goddess hands the preeminence in the dramatic arts to tragedy, in an interesting exposé in which she explains the weight and function of comedy as well as tragedy:

ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι καὶ σεῖς ποιηταί!
Τὸν φοβερὸν ἄγῶνα πλέον παύσατε!
Τὸ δράμα προεξάρχει . . . Εἰς τὰ στήθη μας
ἀνακυῖ παντοῖα συναισθήματα,
ἀγωνιῖ ὁ θεατῆς καὶ καθορῖ
τὸν βίον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, τὴν δὲ Νέμεσιν
ἐτοίμην νὰ τὸν τιμωρήσῃ αὐστηρῶς,
ὁπότεν πρὸς τὰ θεῖα εἶναι ὑβριστής!
Ἡ κωμῳδία δὲ ὑποβιβάζεται,
διότι μόνον νὰ γελᾷ προώρισται,
μὲ τὰς κακίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων· φόβητρον
ἐμπνέει μόνον τοῖς κακοῖς! Γελᾷ αὐτὴ

36 Kennedy (2009) traces the figure of Athena in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, Sophocles' *Ajax* and *Ajax Locrus* (a fragmentary play), and in no less than five plays by Euripides: *Ion*, *Suppliants*, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, *Trojan Women*, and *Erechtheus* (fragmentary). Interestingly, Athena appears as a *dea ex machina* pronouncing justice in the closing scenes of the first three of these plays by Euripides, whereas *Trojan Women* contains a cameo appearance of Athena at the play's opening. Kennedy further introduces issues such as the fallibility of Athena's justice and its association with revenge as justice (Kennedy (2009) 80). On tragedy, verdict, vengeance, and Nemesis, see below.

καὶ μυκτηρίζει τοὺς ἀνθρώπους διὰ τὰς
κακὰς τῶν πράξεις, κ' ἡ αἰδῶς ἀνέρχεται
ἐπὶ τῶν παρειῶν τῶν πορφυρᾶ ὡς φλόξ.
Ἄλλ' ὅμως δὲν κακίζει, οὐτε τιμωρεῖ,
οὐτε τὴν σπάθην σύρει τῆς Νεμέσεως,
ἵνα σκορπίσῃ τοὺς κακοὺς, τοὺς ἀσεβεῖς
Τὸ δρᾶμα προεξάρχει!³⁷

O men of Athens and you poets!
Put an end now to your terrible fight!
Drama [i.e., tragedy] takes primacy . . . In our chest,
it stirs up all sorts of emotions,
the viewer agonizes and looks upon
the human being's life, and on Nemesis,
ready to punish him severely,
whenever he treats the divine with hubris!
Comedy, on the other hand, ranks lower,
because she is destined only to laugh
with the bad sides of people. As a bogey,
comedy scares only the bad folks! She laughs at
and derides people for their bad deeds,
and their cheeks flush with shame, deep red like a flame.
But comedy certainly does not cast blame, nor does she punish,
and she does not draw the sword of Nemesis, either,
to disperse the bad folks, the impious.
Drama [tragedy] takes primacy!

Without much hesitation, Athena chooses tragedy over comedy, and she does not even include athletics in the competition. With the lines εἰς τὰ στήθη μας / ἀνακυκᾷ παντοῖα συναισθήματα, / ἀγωνιᾷ ὁ θεατὴς καὶ καθορᾷ / τὸν βίον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, the goddess casts tragedy's power to arouse the emotions in the familiar Aristotelian terms of pity and fear (δι' ἐλέου καὶ φόβου, *Poetics* 6.2).³⁸ Athena stops short, however, of mentioning the problematic concept of catharsis effected by such emotions.³⁹ Notably, in the goddess' voice, Nikolaras makes

37 Nikolaras (1902) 87–8.

38 See also *Poetics* 9.11c, 13.1–4, and 14.1–5.

39 As Halliwell rightly observes, Aristotle's *Poetics* offers very little elaboration on the character and function of these emotions, but his *Rhetoric* 2 (2.1.8, 2.5 on fear; 2.8 on pity) is more explicit (Halliwell (1998b) 170). For a discussion of the vexed notion of catharsis, see

a double reference to Nemesis, reinforcing Kinyras' earlier naming of Nemesis in Sophoclean tragedy.⁴⁰ Thus, Nikolaras associates tragedy with revenge drama, which brings him closer to Renaissance and early modern times, both heavily vested in the Aristotelian tradition. Revenge drama gained tremendous popularity during the Renaissance by way of Senecan tragedy and Euripides' *Hecuba*.⁴¹ Nikolaras' conception of tragedy does not share, however, Aristotle's prevalent concern with character configuration and with the construction and the intelligibility of the tragic plot.

The hour of evaluation in the *Panathenaia* is not a drawn-out scene, especially when compared to the long decision-making process in the original *Frogs*. Aristophanes had Dionysus evaluate Aeschylus and Euripides at length and had the spectators act as implicit judges.⁴² The original comedy also startled its audience when Dionysus, who had gone to retrieve Euripides from the underworld, suddenly decided to bring back Aeschylus. In Nikolaras' play, Athena's verdict does not come as a surprise. As in the ancient play, however, Nikolaras motivates the choice of genre, which substitutes for the choice of playwrights, by invoking the well-being of the Greeks: with tragedy and its teachings, Athens will reaffirm its moral character. Nikolaras pays lip service to the civic advice that the tragic playwright is expected to give. He reestablishes this practice as the decisive criterion, even though this advising is not seen to take place in his own play. The choice of tragedy as the city's educator represents an acknowledgment of the genre's ethical values, with which comedy is not assumed to engage.⁴³ Thus, Nikolaras' play brings comedy back into view, even if only by negative contrast. The *agon* of Aristophanes' *Frogs*, itself a comedy, paid little attention to the comic genre,⁴⁴ but the play itself still managed to establish its "discursive mastery of . . . tragedy."⁴⁵ Compared to tragedy or athletics, comedy as a genre is, however, a less urgent topic for Nikolaras,

Halliwell (1998b) 184–201. Cf. also Halliwell (2008) 325–7. Lurie introduces the notion of the sixteenth-century "Aristotelization of Greek tragedy" (Lurie (2012) 441).

40 Nikolaras (1902) 73, quoted above.

41 See Wetmore (2008).

42 The centrality of *Frogs* to the tradition of ancient literary criticism has been discussed by many scholars, but see Hunter (2009b) and Porter (2006) for recent analyses.

43 Greek comedy of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was meant to entertain with light-hearted and often imitative subject matter. Aristophanic comedy, however, had gained a position of greater relevance. In 1868, a socialist-inspired Athenian production of *Wealth* had given the ancient comic playwright a modern political voice. See Van Steen (2000) 50–63.

44 This point has been made most persuasively by Heiden (1991).

45 Lowe (2013) 356.

who appears more interested in the confluence and competition among various cultural constituents. Tragedy may take primacy and may be exalted as the genre that expresses theater's civic function, but the modern comedy stops short of calling the tragic poet the city's savior. Nikolaras' play has thus shifted from working on the personal level with poets embodying genres to operating in the more abstract realms of those genres. In addition, by crediting tragedy with seeking the civic good, Nikolaras reinforces the one point of convergence between Aristotle and the characters of Aeschylus, Euripides, and Dionysus in Aristophanes' *Frogs*.

At Athena's request, Aristophanes and Sophocles reconcile. The goddess defines the role and significance of the other characters as well: she calls Kallinikos and Kinyras (tragic poetry and tragic song, respectively) the twin children of the same Muse. In Athena's view, too, the act of the chorus dancer is less prestigious. The goddess further warns the athlete Pentathlos against putting on airs: his achievement is not inferior but is of a different nature altogether. Then Athena calls out Hermes, revealing his identity to the others. She also tells Hermes that Zeus has been looking for him, leaving him to wonder what Zeus might want next. Has Zeus really forgotten that he himself sent Hermes down to earth?! Before taking off, Hermes admonishes the Athenians who, for all their love of the arts and sports, have been neglecting the gods. The Athenians admire their poets and stage actors but seem to have forgotten that the Muses have been their sources of inspiration. They may marvel at Pentathlos' strength but need to acknowledge Ares and Heracles as well. Again, Kephalos invites everyone over to his house for a feast. In good Aristophanic fashion, Nikolaras heightens the celebratory mood of the play's happy-end by broadcasting the wedding of Pentathlos and Arsinoe.

Comic "Theory" in the Modern Greek Voice

Through Athena's words, Nikolaras expresses the common conception of tragedy that posits that the lives of ancient characters bear relevance for modern lives. This perception has been a persistent belief since Aristotle, and, as Helena Patrikiou argues, this tenet is also common among modernist playwrights of the late nineteenth and twentieth century—in particular Henrik Ibsen and Eugene O'Neill.⁴⁶ In the *Panathenaia*, Athena and Kallinikos concur when they point to Sophoclean tragedy's capacity to uphold examples of virtue

46 Patrikiou (2002) 284. On Ibsen's modernist sensibilities, which spoke to theater-goers across cultures, see the recent volume edited by Fischer-Lichte, Gronau, and Weiler (2011).

(73, quoted above), in a verdict reminiscent of Aristotle's famous dictum, ἡ μὲν γὰρ χείρους ἢ δὲ βελτίους μιμεῖσθαι βούλεται τῶν νῦν ("comedy wants to imitate people worse than those of today, whereas tragedy wants to imitate better people," *Poetics* 2.7; also *Poetics* 6.1–2). Reflecting on the dichotomy articulated in this passage, Stephen Halliwell warns that it subsequently "harden(ed) into a critical commonplace, and one often translated... into narrow and inflexible terms of the social rank of the typical characters portrayed by the two genres."⁴⁷ Like Aristotle, Athena (again in the words given to her by Nikolaras) acknowledges the importance of comedy but favors tragedy. When she addresses comedy in the second half of her verdict, she resorts not to Aristotle's literal language but to his conception of comedy as tragedy's antipode: Ἡ κωμῳδία... ὑποβιβάζεται, / διότι μόνον νὰ γελᾷ προώρισται, / μὲ τὰς κακίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων ("Comedy... ranks lower, / because she is destined only to laugh / with the bad sides of people," 87). Aristotle had briefly defined comedy as follows in *Poetics* 5.1–2:

ἡ δὲ κωμῳδία ἐστὶν ὥσπερ εἵπομεν μίμησις φαυλοτέρων μὲν, οὐ μέντοι κατὰ πᾶσαν κακίαν, ἀλλὰ τοῦ αἰσχροῦ ἐστὶ τὸ γελοῖον μόριον. τὸ γὰρ γελοῖον ἐστὶν ἀμάρτημά τι καὶ αἰσχος ἀνώδυνον καὶ οὐ φθαρτικόν.

Comedy, as we have said, is a representation of inferior people, though it does not cover outright evil. The laughable, however, is a kind of ugliness, and this laughable consists in some flaw or base act that does not involve pain or harmful damage.⁴⁸

47 Halliwell (1998b) 267.

48 Demastes remarks on the long-term effects of this seminal passage from the *Poetics*, in which Aristotle, however, left his thoughts about comedy incomplete (*Poetics* 6.1) (Demastes (2008) 11–2). Aristotle analyzed comedy in the second book of the *Poetics*, which has not been preserved. Hadley confirms and further contextualizes Aristotle's impact on comic theory from the sixteenth century onward (Hadley (2014) 18). The Renaissance rediscovery of Aristotle's *Poetics* made earlier, Latin-based theories about comedy and laughter lose prominence. See also Halliwell (1998b) 266, 274, 276, 290–6. Although acknowledging Aristotle's influence on the early modern demand for "decorum," Halliwell hastens to add that neither Aristotle nor one of his interpreters can legitimately be called the sole source of the French Neoclassicist canons (Halliwell (1998b) 303–4). He concludes that the foundation of French Neoclassicism "consisted of the composite, hybrid structure of Renaissance humanism, in which elements were amalgamated from Horace, Aristotle, the rhetoricians and the poetic practice of a range of ancient authors. Superimposed on this were the more specific requirements developed by the French critics from the 1630s onwards—the rational rules of poetic art" (Halliwell (1998b) 304).

The 1902 play recasts Aristotle's theory in a popular, modern Greek form. Following Aristotle, comedy for Nikolaras corrects certain bad habits and is morally instructive, but it is not a punitive or destructive genre. For him, comedy laughs *at*, not *with*, its characters. With this statement, the modern playwright has come full circle to the claim he made in his preface: Θὰ γελάσητε εὐγενῇ καὶ εὐφρόσυνον γέλωτα, πλὴν συγχρόνως καὶ σκεπτικοὶ θὰ φιλοσοφήσητε ἐπὶ τοῦ συγχρόνου βίου ("You will break into a polite and prudent laughter, except that, because you are also skeptical, you will at the same time reflect on contemporary life").⁴⁹ Halliwell explains that the "weaknesses and foibles" with which comedy typically concerns itself "are restricted to the relatively light and harmless—they must stop short of the point of real vice, and also of 'pain and destruction.'" ⁵⁰ After all, matters of "'pain and destruction'" belong to the realm of tragedy.⁵¹ Aristotle's "comedy proper offers a mimesis of generalised action and characters," and it leaves the audience willing to laugh at its own faults.⁵² Also, comedy can elicit powerful shame, πορφυρᾶ ὡς φλόξ ("deep red like a flame").⁵³ Shame, which is another powerful emotion according to Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 2.6), can spur people's ethical improvement and serve as a corrective: those who feel shame will try harder to conform to culturally prescribed norms, to fit in with their contemporary societies. Thus, the genre can serve as a *speculum vitae*, a "mirror of life," in which individuals can observe their own shortcomings as portrayed in a play's characters and then strive to better themselves. Nikolaras, however, does not deduce that, if everyone looked in the mirror, the morality of society as a whole would gain, and comedy would be able to reclaim the sociopolitical role it enjoyed in the classical age. The *topos* of comedy as a mirror or image of life and/or society can be traced back to Cicero (via Donatus and his preoccupation with the plays of Terence), as much neo-Latin comic theory indeed can be traced back to Cicero.⁵⁴ In the process, however, the modern Greek comedy reflects humanist

For a brief synopsis of Aristophanes' reception in early modern times, see Van Steen (2014a).

49 Nikolaras (1902) 5.

50 Halliwell (1998b) 270.

51 Halliwell (1998b) 272.

52 Halliwell (1998b) 271.

53 Nikolaras (1902) 88.

54 Herrick (1950) 57–8, 60, 62, 223–5; and Miola (2010b) 930. Nick Lowe (2013) has convincingly argued that the Alexandrian tragedians initiated a tradition of comic scholarship that centered on the intergeneric to antagonistic relationships between comedy and tragedy, as exemplified in Aristophanes' *Frogs*. For a discussion of the influence of Cicero's

comic theory and sheds light on how this theory was received and adapted in Greece by the onset of the twentieth century.

That a classicizing comedy would become the arena for an *agon* between theater and sports is still a surprise. But this *agon* is fought on the site of Athens, with all its historical, political, and cultural connotations ranging from the classical drama competitions to the athleticism of the ancient city-state. Therefore, this Athenocentric *agon* amounts to a competition among different aspects of what are still the classics. Nikolaras' loose adaptation delivers a cultural commentary on contemporary circumstances in classicizing form. Taken as a whole, the 1902 play is less concerned with poetics per se than with the moral responsibilities and sociopolitical roles of the various genres or pursuits under discussion. The modern playwright has redrawn the dividing lines between ancient poets, genres, and accomplishments, but he remains well aware that his readership and stage audience can still find common ground in a classical education or in Greece's continued classicizing.

Conclusion

Whoever seeks the monuments of a classical education,
 whoever unearths the statues of no one,
 ...
 will be buried with the statues, alive.
 So many marbles and archaeologists will go missing
 and the nation will no longer feed on old glory.⁵⁵

Like Aristophanes' *Frogs*, the 1902 *Panathenaia* of Nikolaras is deeply involved in evaluating the dramatic arts and manly prowess, as well as their functions and representatives. It teases out aspects of the relationship between comic competition, dramatic theory, and theater, creating new forms and functions of and for the latter at the start of the twentieth century. Nikolaras' attempt at literary criticism, however, converses with the Aristotelian tradition and is not conditioned by the age-long legacy of the comparative study of Aeschylus and Euripides that originated in *Frogs*. Also, the modern playwright's engagement with Aristophanes' corpus is not limited to *Frogs*. Many other echoes and allusions reveal Nikolaras' mastery of ancient comedy at large, and his adaptation

ideas on humor, as expressed in his *De oratore*, at the papal courts of the Renaissance, see McCahill (2013) 79–85.

55 Giorgos Soures in 1882, quoted by Demaras (1977) 404.

remains, first and foremost, an expressly liberal amalgamation reveling in the humorous dialectic of past and present. Today's critic might even conclude that the diversified focus of Nikolaras has not benefited the cohesion of his work. The precise date of the modern play, nonetheless, adds poignancy to the contests among genres, the variegated skills, and the classical embodiments they invoke. In light of the Greeks' early twentieth-century Olympic aspirations, the 1902 play sharpens the focus on athletics versus arts, or brawn versus brain. But neither sports nor comedy carries off the prize of preeminence before the judgment of "experts." Nikolaras' play does not reassert the comic playwright's role as a critical check on political power-holders but readily hands tragedy the central place in civic discourse. Nevertheless, the play still represents a significant step in the rise of popular comedy in turn-of-the-century Greece, leaving restrictive classical conventions behind and targeting broader audiences. Nikolaras' work provides clues for the future of Greek comic plays, anticipating the heyday of the rich urban tradition of revues named *Panathenaia* of the earliest decades of the twentieth century. Thus, the 1902 play lets the modern reader comprehend what kind of cultural work this and other early comic adaptations in the Aristophanic vein have performed, and to what extent these early versions can be understood as performative acts capable of shaping new, indigenous genres. The strength of Nikolaras' comedy lies, therefore, in its self-reflexive nature, questioning established comic theory by absorbing and ultimately diverting from its ancient models.

J.T. Sheppard and the Cambridge *Birds* of 1903 and 1924

C.W. Marshall

Established in 1882, the now-triennial Cambridge Greek Play evokes a curious assortment of ideas concerning class, education, and British eccentricity, which in turn prompt important questions in the history of the reception of classical works in the United Kingdom. For the history of the reception of Aristophanes, it becomes possible to see the place that Greek comedy held in the classical proselytizing of the early twentieth century. The Cambridge Greek Play is a peripheral expression of an elite cultural practice, and examining a given production helps articulate something about Cambridge University at this time and the British conception of classics. These are large questions, and one way forward is through an examination of the history of the institution and its wider impact. In a companion study, I have discussed the 1936 and 1947 Cambridge productions of *Frogs*, directed by J.T. Sheppard (1881–1968) during the time he was Provost of King's College (1933–54).¹ This chapter extends the consideration of Sheppard's engagement with Aristophanes, and discusses his first encounter with the Greek Play when, as a promising undergraduate, he played Peithetairos in 1903.² Sheppard would go on to dominate the Greek Play from 1921 to 1950, and “the Sheppard years” (as I have called them) proved to be a period of amazing growth for the Greek Play. The prominence and reputation of the Cambridge Greek Play mark it as a crucial intersection between the academic world and mainstream theatre in Britain actively involving individuals who would determine the course of postwar British theatre (particularly

1 Marshall (2015). The early history of the Cambridge Greek Play is summarized in Easterling (1999), and see Wilkinson (1983) and Easterling (1984). I am grateful to Phil Walsh, Hallie Marshall, and the archivists at King's College (where Sheppard's papers are kept) and the Cambridge University Library (where the archives of the Cambridge Greek Play Committee are kept). This research has benefitted from support from the Hampton Fund at U.B.C. and the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies. An early version of this chapter was presented in 2007 at the meetings of the American Philological Association in San Diego.

2 Texts and translations give the protagonist's name as P(e)isthetairos/-us, Peisitauros/us, or Peithetairos/-us. In this paper I adopt the name as used in the 1903 production.

though the National Theatre and the English National Opera, including composer E.J. Dent, directors John Barton and Ronald Watkins, designer Alec Penrose, and George “Dadie” Rylands). In 1903, of course, none of this could be known.

This chapter discusses the 1903 *Birds* in three stages: first, I will provide some contextual information about classics in Cambridge at this time; second, I will examine what is known of Sheppard at this point in his life; third, I will discuss the production itself, and how it situates itself into the history of the Greek Play. Following this, I shall provide an overview of Sheppard’s subsequent engagements with Aristophanes with a focus on his 1924 production of the same play, this time as its director.

Classics at Cambridge (c. 1903)

There are several aspects of the study of classics at Cambridge at the dawn of the twentieth century that suggest the turmoil that the discipline was facing. The debates concerning the curriculum, as well as the revisions to the Classical Tripos that were ongoing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, were taking classics away from a narrow linguistic focus to a broader contextual appreciation of the entire classical world: “The co-ordination of teaching on an intercollegiate basis, pioneered by the Trinity tutors in the 1860s, was well developed by 1903, when Cornford urged in his pamphlet *The Cambridge classical course. An essay in anticipation of further reform* (1903) that it should be improved and extended.”³ Francis Cornford was still in his twenties and an assistant lecturer at Trinity, but this paper, “delivered to the Cambridge Classical Society, of which he was the first Secretary,” anticipated his 1908 satire on academic politics *Microcosmographia academica*.⁴ Cornford “pointed out that it was quite possible for several different colleges to provide simultaneous lecture courses on exactly the same subject,” suggesting significant systemic inefficiencies.⁵ At the same time, there was an ongoing debate over the abolishment of compulsory Greek for undergraduates to the University, first raised in 1870 but not approved until 1919: “By the 1900s it had become clear that Compulsory Greek was, in the long run, doomed; nevertheless in the last large-scale debate, in 1903, its supporters again outvoted the abolitionists.”⁶

3 Stray (1999a) 9.

4 Todd (2004) 208.

5 Stray (1999a) 11.

6 Stray (1999a) 9; and for a summary, see Raphaely (1999) 76.

The debate was inevitably “so bound up with a web of contemporary issues”; it focalized many societal and university concerns about what was an appropriate education for gentlemen.⁷

While this was happening, however, Cambridge was working to establish a public face for the discipline across Britain. The foundation of the Cambridge Classical Society in 1903 (not to be confused with the already existing Cambridge Philological Society) was meant to serve this purpose, and it can be seen as part of a larger, national movement. The previous year (on 1 March 1902), the Classical Association of Scotland had been founded, and, under the direction of John Postgate of Trinity College, the Classical Association was formed in 1903, with its first meeting in December, the month following the 1903 Greek Play. This flurry of activity recognized the need for a public face for classics if the discipline was to survive. Postgate had written an influential essay “Are the Classics to go?” that was published in the *Fortnightly Review* (1902), at a time he was editor of the *Classical Review* (1898–1906; *Classical Quarterly* was to be founded in 1906). This likely appeared in anticipation of Balfour’s Education Act of 1902, which abolished more than 2,500 locally elected school boards⁸ and therefore centralized expectations for university-bound students across the country. Cambridge classics at this time was therefore polarized between reformists and conservatives, and the tension expressed itself in many ways.⁹

The Cambridge Greek Play in 1903 resonated with these reforms. The production of live theatre in ancient Greek, with performances that are incomprehensible to much of the audience, has not proved itself a preferred way of establishing the relevance of classics. Yet this is surely part of the claim being made through these productions. While appealing to tradition, the Greek Play presents itself both as an elite academic activity and as an elite artistic event. By marketing to schools, classics positioned itself as something to which schoolchildren (of a certain class, admittedly) could aspire. The Greek Play was what might today be called an outreach activity: it served as a showcase of what a traditional Classical education could provide; it provided a social event that impacted the university community at large, while nevertheless affirming the central place of classics within it; and it made artistic claims that at least attracted the attention of the London theatre connoisseurs. All of this is in its way surprising, and it shows the complex political world with which the Greek play was actively engaging.

7 Raphaely (1999) 73.

8 See Pugh (1968) and Ottewill (2007).

9 The central expression of this dynamic were the Praelections of 1906 to replace Richard Jebb as Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge; see Stray (2005).

At the same time, the choice of *Birds* in 1903 was timed to coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the first production of Aristophanes, which had also been *Birds* in 1883, the second production in the year following 1882's *Ajax*.¹⁰ Of the eight productions undertaken between 1882 and 1900, all had been conducted under the supervision of John Willis Clark (1833–1910), of Trinity College, who had taken the Classical Tripos and was a man “passionate” about theatre, but who was superintendent of the Museum of Zoology from 1866–91.¹¹ Most had been tragedies, but *Birds* in 1883 and *Wasps* in 1897 had ensured comedy was present. It is not clear why these plays particularly should have been chosen. Both have good opportunities for visual humor, and Clark's zoological interests were perhaps also a factor: “The records of *Birds* in 1883 show how his various interests were combined: it was on his initiative that samples of birds' skins from stuffed specimens in his museum were sent to the costumiers.”¹² This minor anecdote reveals a great deal about the kinds of authenticity to which these nineteenth-century productions aspired. Plays were performed unmasked, and in period costumes that suggested (within the nineteenth-century naturalistic frame) ancient life, rather than the ancient theatre specifically. There was a strong sense of positivism, implicitly arguing that this gesture towards authenticity (even though the truth was only ornithological and bore no relationship to ancient staging practice as it was understood at the time) through critical distance (which must be seen as an interpretation of the ancient text) would enhance the appeal of the Greek Play for its audiences.

Clark had worked with various colleagues, through whom we may begin to trace a shift in College associations from Trinity to King's.¹³ His early collaborator, American Charles Waldstein (later Walston), was Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum from 1883–89, had been admitted to King's in 1882, and in 1894 became a Fellow. S.M. Leathes helped direct one production in 1894, and H.J. Edwards worked on four of the five productions between 1897 and 1909.¹⁴

10 Easterling (1999) provides a rich introduction to the entire period 1882–1912. On Sir Hubert Parry's music, see also Wrigley (2011a) 62, 64, and 209 n. 58.

11 Easterling (1999) 31.

12 Easterling (1999) 31.

13 Easterling notes that “The predominance of King's and Trinity was to be echoed over a long period of the Greek Play's history” (Easterling (1999) 32).

14 Stanley Mordaunt Leathes (1861–1938), became a fellow of Trinity in 1886, and was lecturer in History 1892–1903. He helped plan the *Cambridge Modern History*.

Leathes was from Trinity, and Edwards formerly so.¹⁵ The production of *Birds* in 1903 was therefore the first production Clark was not actively directing.¹⁶

Clark's successor was Walter Durnford, of King's, who was to become Provost of the college in 1916. His obituary in *The Times* notes that he "coached the actors [of the A.D.C.—the Amateur Dramatic Club], and was even known to appear in person on the stage."¹⁷ There is little sense of innovation within the Greek Play under Durnford. The plays selected had all been staged previously under Clark, and, except for Ralph Vaughn Williams' 1909 music for *Wasps*, the music too was carried over from previous productions. As Easterling writes, "Between 1903 and 1912 all the productions were revivals of earlier successes, and despite such ambitious creative undertakings as the music for *Wasps* there may not yet have been much sense of overall 'interpretation.'"¹⁸ The "yet" in that sentence anticipates Sheppard's involvement as producer. Durnford always worked with a co-producer, except for the 1906 *Eumenides*; Durnford had been Mayor of Cambridge in 1905–06, which apparently left him with some extra time for university theatricals. While Durnford rejected criticisms of amateurism in his productions, there is a sense from the archival records that, as theatre, some of these shows were less than compelling, even if they did remain an important manifestation of the spirit of change that was present in Cambridge classics at the turn of the century.¹⁹

15 Easterling (1999) 31 n. 15.

16 Terminology of the functions in the theatre are hard to disentangle, and at this time "producer" was often used for the role we associate with "director" (the one guiding actors through rehearsals and ultimately responsible for the stage picture). Easterling notes the problem of vocabulary, but claims that "he seems to have trained actors as well as arranging for the making of sets and costumes and managing a great deal of the business of each production" (Easterling (1999) 31). The slippage in terminology is perhaps also to be seen in the change of Waldstein's role from "secretary" in 1882 to "stage manager" in 1883. Nevertheless, it is clear that there was a lot of preparatory work and comparatively few rehearsals of the entire cast. With the 1903 *Birds*, records indicate the first formal rehearsal (perhaps the first rehearsal in the theatre itself, or the first with the entire cast present) was on Monday, 16 November—i.e., just over a week before the play opened.

17 [1] (all references in square brackets refer to media sources listed at the end of this chapter).

18 Easterling (1999) 45.

19 Easterling (1999) 43–4.

J.T. Sheppard at King's College

It was into this world that John Tressider Sheppard arrived at King's in 1900.²⁰ Raised in a strict Baptist home,²¹ he "quietly dropped the connection" with his parents' faith and "soon became agnostic, though retaining hankerings for religion that increased with age."²² Like many undergraduates, he seems not to have been fully focused in these early years. A favorite of the slightly clownish and often offensive Oscar Browning—O.B. as he was known—Sheppard remained a longtime advocate for the man, despite his flaws and his passion for young boys, which led him to be dismissed from his position at Eton.²³ Though Sheppard "inherited a touch of buffoonery from Oscar Browning," he nevertheless by 1903 was President of the Union, Cambridge's debating society.²⁴ He was apparently active in sport, but his enthusiasm seems not to have been matched by native ability.²⁵

As a student he excelled. Taught by A.C. Pearson at his school, Dulwich College, at Cambridge he won nearly every prize available to him.²⁶ In 1902, he was awarded the Porson Prize for Greek Verse translation;²⁷ he won the Craven scholarship, as well as the Chancellor's Classical Medal, and he came second for the Chancellor's medal for English Verse.²⁸ At King's, Sheppard's tutors were Walter Headlam (one of the unsuccessful candidates for the Regius Chair of Greek in 1906) and Nathaniel Wedd, both of whom were interested in Greek

20 The best overview of Sheppard's life is Wilkinson (1969), though it is focused on his role as Provost, and does not emphasize the Cambridge Greek Play. See also Annan (1999) 111–6; and Todd (2004) 886–7.

21 Wilkinson (1969) 2; and (1980) 46.

22 Wilkinson (1981) 13; and (1980) 53–4.

23 Wilkinson (1980) 12. Sheppard "had been a special protégé of his [O.B.'s], though telling stories about his idiosyncrasies with gusto, inherited many traits from him, including a somewhat excessive reverence for royalty and nobility, and never ceased to champion him as a power on the side of light in education" (Annan (1999) 102).

24 Annan (1999) 111. One of his fellowship referees wrote, "Mr S has an unfortunate lightness of touch. This might be cured by a year in a German seminar."

25 Wilkinson (1969) 8.

26 A curious note in his daybook for 1901, which survives in the Sheppard archives at King's College, indicates that he learned the Greek alphabet on 23 January 1901. This seems very late (the beginning of his second term at Cambridge), and yet the note exists.

27 The winning composition was a translation from Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* 4.5.182–226.

28 Wilkinson (1969) 7. The Chancellor's medal was won by that year Giles Lytton Strachey, the future author of *Eminent Victorians*.

theatre.²⁹ By 1902 Sheppard had achieved a First in part I of the *Tripes*, but in 1904 he would achieve only a Second in part II, though this result is not quite as unexpected as is sometimes implied, given his other interests.

Chief among these was his involvement with the Cambridge Conversazione Society, also known as the Apostles.³⁰ His election to this elite group in many ways seems unsurprising: he was a promising scholar, under the patronage of both Wedd and O.B., both of whom were classicists and Apostles. Sheppard was elected to the society on the same day as Lytton Strachey of Trinity, and their friendship developed over the next two years, during which time Sheppard “remained the chief figure in his [Strachey’s] emotional life.”³¹ The two traveled together to Sussex in December 1903, the month after the production of *Birds*, but their close relationship diminished soon afterwards. This was nevertheless a very active moment for the Apostles, which at the time had only six active undergraduate members. In 1903, the philosopher G.E. Moore (Trinity) published his *Principia Ethica*, which had developed during meetings of the Apostles, and historian G.M. Trevelyan, also of Trinity, founded the *Independent Review*, a progressive journal in London which would highlight contributions by Apostles throughout its run (1904–11).

In the same way that the Greek Play was experiencing a shift in its primary affiliation, as part of a gradual move from Trinity to its neighbor King’s College, so Sheppard himself was, in many ways, intimately associated with prominent figures from both colleges. His participation as the lead in the 1903 production, while he was excelling as a student of classics and involved with many of the dominant personalities of Cambridge at this time, demonstrates the resonances the Greek Play could generate.

Birds in 1903

Since the institution of the Cambridge Greek Play in 1882, the most performed play has been Aristophanes’ *Birds*, acted in 1883, 1903, 1924, 1971, and 1995. In 1903 the play ran for six performances, from November 24–28, with a matinee on the final Saturday. For the first time in the institution’s history—and this does seem to have been an innovation of Durnford—the scale of the event was

29 Wilkinson (1981) 190.

30 Wilkinson (1980) 50–4, and see Lubenow (1998).

31 Holroyd (1971) 215; and see Annan (2001) 115. Several personal letters survive in the Sheppard archives, with Lytton Strachey habitually referring to Sheppard as “Frank” (not “Jack,” as he was generally known).

increased with the inclusion of public lectures on the play by prominent faculty. Both lecturers were from Trinity, and this perhaps can be seen as another of Durnford's attempts to maintain a connection with the Greek Play's past. One was by Sir Richard Jebb, Regius Professor of Greek, and in it he describes his memories of the 1883 production of the play.³² Twenty years had passed, and Durnford was using the opportunity to repeat the earlier success as a kind of anniversary. Jebb's lecture lent authority to the evocation of the past.

More controversial was the paper of Arthur Verrall, which exemplifies the type of rationalist criticism so intimately associated with his name. Verrall too had long been associated with the Greek Play. His 1890 edition of *Ion* (in which he develops the idea that *Ion* is really the illegitimate child of Xuthus) coincided with the production of the play in that year. In 1895 Verrall's *Euripides the Rationalist* had presented a new way of thinking about literature that led directly to the New Criticism of the twentieth century.³³ The content of Verrall's lecture was not published until 1924 (the year when *Birds* was again the Greek Play, now under the direction of Sheppard, and a dozen years following Verrall's death),³⁴ with only the meager excuse that the lecture "was delivered from notes."³⁵ Nevertheless, it fell to W.H. Clark, now not part of the play for the very first time, to summarize the content of the lecture:

He enforces the generally entertained opinion that Aristophanes is satirizing one of the very private religions prevalent in Athens, at the time. Various passages in the play lead him to the conclusion that the particular form of religion which is satirized is the Phoenician or Palestinian, and consequently the symbols which are the most prominent in the play

32 Jebb (1903). His description is largely an account of the plot of the play, but it is filled with detailed observations that show his vivid memories of the earlier production. From this description can be gained a sense of the costumes and the set. He recalls the appearance of the informer "in a much-patched coat . . . In our performance he was a very effective figure, with long straight hair (such as Plato ascribes to Meletus the accuser of Socrates), and generally with an unkempt air of hungry rascality that left nothing to be desired." The third act begins "on the ramparts" of the new city, but "The scene-painter had ingeniously put in an unfinished gateway, suggestive of a new-born city." The humor conveyed from this description is at times rather subtle, as with the presentation of the Triballian god, who wears blue trousers and has a gaudy shield, but shows his barbarian nature most fully by the fact that "He has, indeed, adopted a Greek cloak for the occasion, but has put it on the right shoulder instead of the left" (Jebb (1903) xxii, xxii, and xxii).

33 See Ford (2005) and Lowe (2005).

34 [2].

35 [3].

are precisely those which appear in our churches as carvings or pictures in stained glass.³⁶

He continues:

It is also unnecessary that we should pronounce an opinion on Dr Verrall's interpretation, though for our own part we are ready to believe it 'before breakfast,' like the White Queen. And, in any case, *se non è vero, è Verrall* ['even if it's not true, it's Verrall'].³⁷

Clark is playing on the Italian proverb which ends . . . *è ben trovato* ("it's appropriate"). He then adds, laconically, "It is interesting to note, by the way, that the acting edition omits the very passage on which this theory ultimately rests."³⁸ A contemporary source refers to the packed audiences at these lectures, with repeat performances, people sitting on the floor, and waits of hours to get tickets—to the lectures, to say nothing of the performance itself.³⁹ Consequently, the production is described as "the event to which now the whole of Cambridge seems to be looking forward and which is the topic of conversation."⁴⁰

Such hyperbole is perhaps to be expected, even if it is not fully believed. The Greek Play Committee had ensured that the 1903 production would be an event, and the larger scholarly apparatus was invoked to ensure that the production was most widely felt. To understand the event and the theatrical decisions made depends, to a large extent, on using contemporary reviews, supplemented with archival materials.⁴¹ The play was performed in three acts,⁴² and the performance as a whole apparently lasted more than three hours (the

36 [3].

37 [3].

38 [3]. For the lecture, see Verrall (1924); and Lowe (2005) 154. The omitted passage mentioned will have been lines 504–7 (in which the cuckoo, which gives its name to the bird city, is connected with Phoenicia) or 1686–7, where Basileia is supposedly identified with the Queen of Heaven.

39 [4].

40 [4].

41 Hardwick (1999) provides a foundational methodology for the use of the review in classical reception studies. See also Marshall (2015).

42 The acts correspond to lines 1–800, 801–1117, 1118–1765 of Aristophanes' *Birds*, though with a few cuts. The performance text is available in Sheppard (1924). Jebb (1903) suggests a slightly different three-act structure (1–800, 801–1552, 1553–1765). I imagine that there was a single interval (after line 800) and that the difference between scene-changes and

first night ended at 11:30).⁴³ Different sets were used for each act; for example, “When the curtain rose [on the second act] the audience applauded heartily, so charmed were they with the picture of billowy vapour and vast misty spaces that the scene painter had evolved. Need more be said?”⁴⁴

The music—“at once acknowledged to be a masterpiece of humour”—had been composed by Sir Hubert Parry, who conducted for two of the performances.⁴⁵ Parry had been Professor of Music at Oxford since 1900, and is perhaps best known for his musical setting of Blake’s *Jerusalem*. He engaged with the challenge of reviving his music for the Greek play fully, and was active in creating the scores for Greek productions at both universities: at Cambridge, *Birds* in 1883 and 1903, and *Agamemnon* in 1900; at Oxford, *Frogs* in 1892 and 1909, *Clouds* in 1905, and *Acharnians* in 1914.⁴⁶ There were changes introduced by Parry in 1903: while the parabasis had been unaccompanied in 1883, it was here spoken to musical accompaniment, one of fifteen short choral numbers Parry composed.⁴⁷ Overall, Parry’s intention for the music was less serious in the 1892 *Frogs*, as one reviewer noted.⁴⁸ There was jesting to be had: one reviewer at the opening night praised “the Runner-bird’s bold mimicry of Sir Hubert Parry—a piece of audacity surely unparalleled in Aristophanic drama except by Dionysus’ appeal, in ‘The Frogs,’ to his own priest!”⁴⁹

act-breaks in performance was negligible; though there are other explanations for this inconsistency.

43 [5]; and see [6] 101.

44 [7].

45 [8].

46 Dent (1903–04) discusses the *Frogs* music; see also Radcliffe (1983) and Dibble (2004). Edward Joseph Dent (1876–1957) was Professor of Music in the University of Cambridge from 1926 to 1941, and a Fellow of King’s College from 1902 to 1908 and again from 1926 until his death. For the Oxford University Drama Society productions, see Wrigley (2011a).

47 [9].

48 [10]. Indeed, the stateliness of the music for the wedding to Basileia has no apparent humor in it, and the piece has been used without conscious irony in modern weddings.

49 [6] 101. This discussion is the fullest piece of criticism on the production, written under the pseudonym Apemantus. The same reviewer also expects runner bird to have a large bill, because of the line “Ἀπολλὼν ἀποτρόπαιε, τοῦ χασμήματος” (“Defending Apollo, what a gape!”—*Birds* 61), which he quotes in Greek. Who expects these things? Such scholarly assumptions are often passed along in the classroom (this one persists: see the 2000 Loeb translation of the play by Henderson, *ad loc.*). It is one thing to believe in the possibility of a given costume choice (for ornithological or comedic reasons), but quite another to single out an individual line, concerning a stage figure only isolated in this same line, and comment on it in a review. Only a small fraction of the readership will appreciate such comments in any case, and fewer still, if any, would have shared the view during a

Of course, many of the reviews isolate the performance of Sheppard as Peithetairos.⁵⁰ With about 570 lines, it is the longest part in extant Aristophanes, and it is very physically demanding. W.H. Clark writing in the *Daily News* praised Sheppard's acting:

Mr. Sheppard showed that he possesses real comic ability; and his Greek was spoken with a colloquial ease and fluency which is extremely difficult of attainment, though, needless to say, equally important and effective. He was inclined to be too slow in the second act, where a certain sameness in the action tends in any cast to produce a somewhat monotonous effect; but we have no doubt that this will pass away with the natural difficulties of a first night's performance.⁵¹

Sheppard "throws himself into his part from first to last, with complete self-abandonment, and uses his facial muscles and his gestures admirably. When he mimics the priest, his burlesque of the pompous Ritualist is very comic." Clark continues:

... those who knew Mr. Sheppard's untiring vivacity, his brilliant versatility, and his keen sense of humour, expected a first-rate Peithetairos. And they were in no wise disappointed. Mr. Sheppard was splendid throughout. His energy never flagged; we heard every word he said; he made all his points with most telling force; above all he was inimitably funny. We

performance, even if it were a historically legitimate concern. Such discussions are nevertheless frequent in reviews. Apemantus also describes the runner bird's performance: "Mr. Glencross—surely the most waggish of the M.A.'s—had a truly plover-like style of running, and shook his wings in a most quaint fashion" ([6] 101).

50 See photographs of Sheppard as Peithetairos and of the Hoopoe in *A Hundred Years of the Cambridge Greek Play* (1983) n. pag.; a souvenir programme for the centennial production of the Cambridge Greek Play production of *Women of Trachis*; and Easterling (1999) 45. See also the note on photographs in Media Sources at the end of this chapter.

51 [11]. In contrast, one critic writes, "In Act 2 Mr. J.T. Sheppard... began to show his real quality as Peisthetairos. The frenzy of his rolling eye and the mad look of his crown on one side were all just right. He is one of the few persons who can speak Greek as though it were a colloquial language with a real human meaning..." ([9]). The supposed "sameness in action" mentioned here is a structural aspect of the play that I have discussed at Marshall (2013). Similarly, Jebb singles out the variation offered by the different types of interlopers as one of the details that emerge from the play in performance that "bring out the remarkable merits of the *Birds* as an acting comedy" (Jebb (1903) xxiii).

might have expected a slightly more dignified Peithetairos; but a more convincing Peithetairos could hardly be imagined.⁵²

And again:

If at times his articulation left something to be desired, he entered with the utmost spirit into the humour of his character. . . . His energy throughout was irresistible and his by-play excellent. Particularly effective was his working up in the episode in the first act of the passage in which he represents to the birds how much they had fallen from their high estate, and gains once and for all their full sympathy in his schemes of restoration.⁵³

Sheppard's diction is regularly praised. According to the *Cambridge Chronicle*, he "enunciated his lines with commendable distinctness, and displayed much dramatic ability."⁵⁴ As is the case in reviews of any original-language performance, there exist the seemingly obligatory observations about false quantities:

Peithetairos may again be pardoned for once pronouncing ἄγγελος as a mixture of 'angelus' and 'angel.' The freak was just worth committing, since it called up a question by which many of his hearers were intrigued.⁵⁵

Another comment betrays a more nuanced understanding of the presentation of the Greek text, admitting that the words spoken were not always verbatim, and that Sheppard had the ability to approximate iambic trimeters in Greek:

J.T. Sheppard was excellent as Peithetairus, a humorsome creature, pleased at his burlesque dignity. Did he always repeat the right text? No, Zoilus, but he spoke what would scan, achieving in a moment more than the erudite Teuton has done in a century or two of studying Greek texts. And such lapses were rare. His grand pauses were so grand that one almost feared for the prompter's nerves.⁵⁶

The Guardian concludes that most believe "the performance of 1903 equaled, or possibly surpassed, in quality that of 1883. It is true there was no exhibition of

52 [6] 100–1.

53 [12].

54 [13]. This same review mentions Parry and the opening curtain call.

55 [14]. This refers to the play's first messenger (line 1119).

56 [15].

originality or perfect command of Greek like the Peithetairos of Dr. James . . .”⁵⁷ M.R. James had played the role in 1883, and it is curious to note that both he and Sheppard would eventually become Provost of King’s College.⁵⁸ And as several reviewers attest, Sheppard’s performance overall was commended.⁵⁹

This continuity with the past is to be found in another role that was cast with an eye to the 1883 performance, R.H.A. Storrs (of Pembroke College) as Prometheus:

This very part was played by his uncle, Mr. ‘Harry’ Cust, in 1883, and it was quite right that Mr. Storrs should establish a family tradition by the piece of business in which he took a furtive glance over the umbrella towards Olympus and then, terrified, nipped back again like a rabbit into a hole.⁶⁰

Indeed, this was one of the moments Jebb had isolated in his recollection of the earlier play: “the part was well played by Mr H. Cust, one of whose hits was made at the point where Prometheus permits himself the luxury of one defiant shout at Zeus, and then instantly cowers down again under his umbrella.”⁶¹

There are many moments of comedy that could be isolated. I am struck particularly by the decision to play Euelpides as a straight man, in contrast to Peithetairos. While Euelpides is eventually overshadowed by his companion, the script (I believe) offers no suggestion that he is not a vital and enthusiastic contributor to the initial plan. Yet Clark writes as follows:

57 [10]. Sheppard is identified as “an accomplished actor as well as an excellent scholar.”

58 The continuity between playing in *Birds* and becoming Provost is noted by Wilkinson: “It was as Peisthetairus in Aristophanes’ *Birds* in 1903 (a part that another future Provost, M.R. James had played twenty years before) that Sheppard first made his mark on the stage” (Wilkinson (1981) 88). James was Provost of King’s 1905–18.

59 “Peithetairos (J.T. Sheppard), without achieving a signal triumph, is good all through, with flashes of brilliance” ([16]); “In addition to presenting an appearance that accorded well with pre-conceived ideas of a peculiar and light-hearted Athenian, he displayed at every turn a fitness for the part” ([7]); “He throws himself into his part from first to last, with complete self-abandonment, and uses his facial muscles and his gestures admirably” ([17]); “In his hearty flogging off of the plaguy fellows from Athens who sought to intrude into the birds’ domain, Peithetairos proved himself a histriomastix of the first water” ([18]; this review includes black and white drawings of Sheppard sitting and of the bird chorus).

60 [9]. Storrs “spoke his lines as if to the manner born” ([10]).

61 Jebb (1903) xxii.

Full of humour himself, he [Peithetairos] has little patience with the fatuity of his comrade, who cannot resist making flat jokes, which are ignored by Peithetairos and everybody else. In one of his long, dull anecdotes, a cock crows in the middle. Euelpides makes a grimace at the noise, frowns until it is over, and continues his anecdote. He is an ideal bore.⁶²

Children's toys were used as stage properties: "The sacrifice of the goat—a toy which squeaked when pressed—and you may be sure that it was pressed a good deal—was excellent fooling."⁶³ Peithetairos' attitude also changes towards the end of the play:

Mr. Sheppard's fatuous expression when Peithetairos asks Prometheus as to the identity of the promised bride was a piece of finished art, and his assumption of the Olympian manner at the close was capital, though the reason for appearing with his beard shaved was scarcely apparent.⁶⁴

This last detail is explained in another review, which notes that Sheppard "appeared beardless and blooming, with a yellow wig," rejuvenated for his coming marriage with the personified Youth.⁶⁵

Finally, we can even isolate jokes played by the cast on the final night of the production. One reviewer, whose familiarity suggests he has seen at least one other performance, notes, "the flamingo laid an egg!"⁶⁶ The review continues:

The scene that ensued beggars description. Never in the history of a Greek play have such shouts of merriment greeted an unrehearsed effect. Who was responsible for the innovation has yet to be discovered, but he may congratulate himself on the introduction of a jest that will live in the memory of those who witnessed it whenever the comedy is recalled.

62 [11].

63 [9]. The evocation of contemporary pantomime is inferred from a reference to "the minute Lowther Arcade goat (with mechanical squeak)" ([19]). Another source ([20]) even included an inset drawing of the goat to compliment the illustration of the bird chorus marching on the Athenians.

64 [19].

65 [6] 102.

66 [21]. The review also notes that during the last night's performance P.F. Boughey played the flamingo. The true author of this jest is not certain, however, since another review attributes it to a different bird, mentioning "one of the cocks at the last performance, which succeeded in laying a large chocolate egg" ([17]). The cocks were played by W.H.B. Carrie and W.R.C. Adcock.

Ornithological verisimilitude of another sort also seems to have caused delight: “The cocks in particular walked and crowed magnificently. When the priest throws them some grain, they are all down pecking it up in the most natural manner.”⁶⁷

While it is clear there was much to entertain an audience, the overall success of the play as a comedy is more difficult to assess:

One would have thought that, in an audience where a large number of the ladies present must know Greek, there would have been a louder recognition of the jokes intended by the author; but those who understood them were not moved to audible expression of mirth, feeling, no doubt, that they would be in a minority if they laughed at all.⁶⁸

This correspondent concluded that the play “did not seem quite as amusing as it did in 1883.” Such an observation also reflects the peculiar sense of nostalgia that infused the production, keeping it firmly in the nineteenth-century theatrical tradition.⁶⁹ It is also a consequence of perhaps any original language performance. The best jokes of the play are received with almost total silence, and open laughter is reserved for horseplay or physical comedy, such as when the birds dart around trees or try to pick up seed.⁷⁰ The critic from the *Cambridge Review* agreed:

But cool reflection brings with it a doubt whether the play is successful as a *comedy*. Nearly every member of the large audience probably came away with the feeling of having spent a most enjoyable evening; it was interesting, it was delightful—but was it, as it must originally have been, uproariously funny? It is a very severe test for an amusing play to have to leave all the jokes out of account. If we saw the jokes, we had looked them out in annotated editions; if we had not, we missed them; in neither case could we raise an honest hearty laugh.⁷¹

It is useful to have such observations, because they recognize an inherent problem of staging an original-language comedy. The fact that the same review

67 [17].

68 [19].

69 This sort of conservatism persists: in 1965 when *Oedipus Tyrannus* was produced, the published script included Sheppard’s translation—from 1920!

70 [19].

71 [16].

goes on to favor the scholiast's attribution of line 448 over that of the manuscripts demonstrates that these comments are in the end not intended for every potential reader.

It is worth lingering, however, over the phrase "as it must originally have been," from the *Cambridge Review*, since the referent for "originally" is ambiguous. There had been no opportunity to see *Birds* performed in England for twenty years, and here it was being remounted while consciously preserving a number of staging decisions, especially the use of Parry's music. If the reviewer is evoking the 1883 production, then audience disappointment (at least as experienced by this correspondent) is connected to a specific Victorian achievement that he has only heard about (in contrast, the writer for the *Times* implies that he had seen the earlier performance). It is equally possible that the reviewer is fancifully comparing this production to that at the Dionysia in 414 BC, when *Birds* was performed before an audience of native Greek speakers in the theatre for which the play had been written and won a prize. We know virtually nothing about the actual quality of acting in antiquity, but such a comparison in a theatrical review seems, shall we say, unhelpful. The original production was obviously effective, but it is not obvious that the reviewer would have appreciated the play more in 414, even on an issue such as diction. Anyone who has heard recordings of the great Shakespearian actors in previous generations knows that it is much harder to get caught up in a performance conceived and initially executed in a previous era. The reviewer's comment falters regardless of its intended meaning (and different readers will have made different initial assumptions on this question). Modern productions can't ever achieve what previous ones did, or (better) what the heart tells the memory that previous ones were able to do. The emptiness of the claim is nevertheless important, and it shows the reviewer perpetuating some memory (even if we do not know exactly which one) of the performance history of the play.

Further, knowledge of Greek—not merely the ability to construe a passage in print, but to comprehend it aurally when presented with the passage in performance (when one is also attending to music and visual qualities)—is, disingenuously, assumed by the *Times* correspondent to exist in the majority of the target audience, as is seen with the pejorative qualifier that it is found even among "a large number of the ladies present."⁷² The complement is so backhanded that it is difficult to disentangle. Part of the writer's point might be that men would not laugh aloud at a comedy but women would (or that women would do so with less restraint), but that is not a complete explanation.

72 [19].

Though Greek had been part of the Oxbridge education for centuries, fluent aural comprehension was not taught and would have been a challenge for any audience member. One regularly finds references to the most educated readers following the play while reading cribs, acting editions sold in the lobby with both the Greek text and a facing English translation.⁷³ This suggests that many of the most educated spectators were not attending for theatrical appreciation at all, but for the rare experience of hearing Ancient Greek spoken aloud. As spectators, they appear to believe that the scholarly pose (reading a text, whichever side of the page is being scanned) is more important than viewing the performance. Watching the play was not as important as the cultural experience (of a curious if charming elite activity).

Over five thousand people attended the play during its run. This was almost 50% more than had seen any previous Greek Play,⁷⁴ and even if the success is to be attributed more to the use of a larger theatre than to Walter Durnford as the new director, the new air associated with the Greek Play was certainly working in concert with the many changes in the field of classics that were emerging from Cambridge.⁷⁵ As the theatrical debut of the impulsive young undergraduate J.T. Sheppard, the production also marked the beginning of a new era for the Cambridge Greek Play, which would extend for fifty years and would define the institution for the twentieth century.

Birds in 1924

Sheppard's involvement with the Cambridge Greek Play was to continue. He joined the Greek Play Committee on 14 October 1909 (the same day Francis Cornford and Jane Harrison joined). Aristophanes' *Wasps* was performed in that year, and Vaughan Williams' music from that production has entered the modern classical repertoire. In 1912, he co-directed the production of *Oedipus Tyrannus* with Charles Durnford. Following World War I, during which time

73 Sheppard (1924) is one of these. For example, a cartoon published in "At *The Frogs*" has an undergraduate sarcastically ask, "Increases one's respect for one's Tutor, doesn't it, to see him wedged in the Pit and reading the English side of the crib? There's a Reader and a Professor doing the same..." ([22]).

74 [14]. Clark says 5,056 people saw *Birds* in 1903: archive records indicate that *Wasps* in 1897 had 3,519 tickets sold; in 1883 *Birds* had 2,704 (this was admittedly in the previous theatre, and play was performed five times, not six. These numbers are one indication of the growing success of the Cambridge Greek Play.

75 The larger theatre also provided considerably more space for the orchestra than had been available previously ([23]).

the Greek Play was suspended, Sheppard found himself in sole custodianship of the institution, and would remain so for three decades. Sheppard directed eight productions between 1921 and 1950: a condensed *Oresteia* in 1921 and 1933, Aristophanes' *Birds* in 1924, Sophocles' *Electra* and Aristophanes' *Peace* in a double bill in 1927,⁷⁶ Euripides' *Bacchae* in 1930, Aristophanes' *Frogs* in 1936 and 1947, *Antigone* in 1939, and *Oedipus at Colonus* in 1950.

The first meeting of the reinstated Greek Play Committee was on 19 February 1920, and three months later, according to the minutes for the 21 May meeting, Sheppard suggested the next plays: *Birds* if it was to be a comedy, the *Oresteia* if a tragedy. The *Oresteia* was chosen for production in 1921, and *Birds* was confirmed in May 1923 as the next play to be performed.

The 1924 *Birds* is documented less fully in the Cambridge archives than is the 1903 production, and apparently this is due in part to a diminished interest from the press in the institution at this time. Nevertheless, it is possible to make a number of isolated observations based on the photographs that are preserved. While one must always be cautious about over-interpreting details seen in production photos, certain theatrical details do emerge.⁷⁷ Because there are so many characters in the play, individual photos of each allow some sense of the choices made. Peithetairos himself is not as visually impressive: Sheppard had embodied the role with an apparent pomposity suitable for the would-be usurper of Zeus. Euelpides is older than he had been presented in 1903 and is now bald. Poseidon is stiff, but his costume is covered with ribbons, undermining his dignity. It seems one undergraduate played a sacrificial goat on all fours. The overall sense from the photographs is that the production quality is not as high as it had been in 1903. Prometheus' routine with the umbrella was preserved, and the umbrella appears much smaller in this production, offering even less protection from Zeus' gaze.

One costume in particular stands out in this production, and that is the Triballian. In the 1903 production, the Triballian had been underwhelming by design: "a barbarian god dressing no better than the dramatic critics are said to do nowadays."⁷⁸ Nevertheless, some distinction to the role was provided by the size of the actor, H.R. Bates, who was "the tallest colour sergeant in the

76 In 1913, the Cambridge Greek play again doubled tragedy and comedy, when *Prometheus Bound* was staged with *Frogs*, under the direction of Helen Eastman.

77 Marshall (2015) 189. The photos are all kept in the Greek Play Committee Papers, in an album (AL 1924a), at the Cambridge University Library archives.

78 [24]. Because this comes from a preliminary notice intended to generate interest in the production, it would seem to reflect a deliberate decision for the *mise-en-scène* of that production, rather than a critic's quip.

volunteer force at 6'4".⁷⁹ In contrast, the 1924 Triballian is a truly alien figure: The bearded creature, wearing high boots and a tall hat, was adorned with a variegated costume the pattern of which seemed to evoke a Harlequin. A pair of extra arms was attached at the shoulders, and reached up, elbows akimbo, to the top of the hat. As a result, when the character stood with his hands on his hips, the effect was of three lozenges on top of each other, one formed by the artificial limbs, one by the actor's real arms, and one by the puff in the costume trousers. If we are to find inspiration for this bizarre design, I suggest we may reasonably look to the appearance of the Green Martians that appear in Edgar Rice Burrough's *Barsoom* novels, beginning with *A Princess of Mars* (first published in 1912). It is a startling, monstrous image.

Aristophanes continues to be represented regularly as part of the Cambridge Greek Play, throughout Sheppard's involvement and beyond. As has been mentioned, in 1927 the Greek Play consisted of a double bill, consisting of a greatly reduced version of Aristophanes' *Peace* (focusing on the first half), performed after Sophocles' *Electra*. According to the program for the production, the rationale behind the pairing emerges from the contrast on the theme of war: "The *Electra* is a tragic study of the spirit which is both the fruit and the cause of war. In lieu of the traditional satyric drama, an extract is to be presented from the gay extravaganza composed by Aristophanes to celebrate the prospect of the Peace of Nicias in 421 BC." The contrast in tone was important, even if the underlying assumption depends on an idiosyncratic understanding of *Electra*. This production ran from 22–26 February, with two matinees (on Thursday, 24 February, and Saturday, 26 February) for a total of seven performances at the New Theatre, Cambridge.⁸⁰ Trygaeus was played by F.J.A. Caruso of King's, who continued to be involved with the production of *Frogs* in 1936. Rather than an orchestra, music was played on the piano by Walter Leigh, the composer who would write the music for *Frogs* in 1936 and who at this time was studying with Paul Hindemith at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik. The Beetle was made by Rev. Kingsbury Jameson, and was played by E.E. Owen. Macedonian historian N.G.L. Hammond played one of Trygaeus' two daughters.

Given that Sheppard was to dominate the Greek Play for these three decades (1921–50), it is hard to understate the importance of the 1903 production of *Birds* in which he played the protagonist for shaping the subsequent history of the institution. Coming as it did when the discipline of classics was actively re-forming itself in the United Kingdom with a greater emphasis on outreach

79 [9].

80 *Electra* was decided, with Sheppard directing, on 18 June 1926; *Peace* was added on 8 December 1926.

and the public face, the prominence given through the performance can be measured by the numerous contemporary reviews in the British press. This in turn can authorize many conclusions about the production decisions made in that production. Some of these clearly looked back to the past, and the original production of *Birds* at Cambridge in Greek twenty years earlier in 1883. More significant, however, is that it provided a motive for Sheppard to return to *Birds* after the Great War, in his production of 1924. In this way, the framing of the two *Birds* productions with which Sheppard was involved can be seen to anticipate the two *Frogs* productions on either side of World War II.

Media Sources

Reviews. Contemporary reviews and pre-show press announcements are listed in the order of citation. They are cited by newspaper and date; the name or pseudonym of the correspondent is included when given.

- [1] *The Times*, 8 April 1926.
- [2] *Cambridge Review*, 22 Feb 1924.
- [3] *Cambridge Review*, 19 Feb 1924 (W.H. Clark).
- [4] *Madame*, 21 November 1903 ("Granta").
- [5] *Yorkshire Daily Post*, 26 November 1903.
- [6] *The Granta* 17 (no. 367), 28 November 1903 ("Apemantus"), 97–112.
- [7] *Cambridge Daily News*, 25 November 1903.
- [8] *The Times*, 18 November 1903.
- [9] *Manchester Guardian*, 26 November 1903 ("JBA").
- [10] *The Guardian*, 2 December 1903 ("JET").
- [11] *Daily News*, 25 November 1903 (W.H. Clark).
- [12] *Athenaeum*, 5 December 1903 ("T").
- [13] *Cambridge Chronicle*, 27 November 1903.
- [14] *Cambridge Review*, 3 December 1903.
- [15] *The Morning Leader*, 3 December 1903 ("Arminius").
- [16] *Cambridge Review*, 26 November 1903.
- [17] *Pilot*, 5 December 1903.
- [18] *Illustrated London News*, 5 December 1903.
- [19] *Times Supplement*, 27 November 1903.
- [20] *Daily Graphic*, 27 November 1903.
- [21] *Modern Society*, 12 December 1903.
- [22] "At *The Frogs*" *The Oxford Magazine*, 2 March 1892, p. 217 [cartoon].

[23] *The Times*, 25 November 1903.

[24] *Daily Mail*, 11 November 1903.

Photographs. Many of the archive photographs are available online. For the 1903 production, see <<http://www.cambridgegreekplay.com/plays/1903/birds>>, and in particular photos 1 (Sheppard as Peithetairus), 8 (Prometheus under the umbrella), 17 (the Triballian), and 3, 4, 5, 12, 13, 14, and 20 (for the chorus, with varying degrees of ornithological accuracy). For the 1924 production, see <<http://www.cambridgegreekplay.com/plays/1924/birds>>, and in particular photos 3 (Euelpides), 16 (the Triballian is the third figure from the right), and 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 13 (for the chorus).

Murray's Aristophanes

Mike Lippman

There is no commoner cause of historical misjudgment than the tendency to read the events of the past too exclusively in the light of the present, and so twist the cold and unconscious record into the burning service of controversial politics. And yet history is inevitably to a great extent a work of the imagination. No good historian is content merely to repeat the record of the past. He has to understand it, to see behind it, to find more in it than it actually says. He cannot understand without the use of his constructive imagination and he cannot imagine effectively without the use of his experience.

—GILBERT MURRAY, *Aristophanes and the War Party* (1919)

A worthwhile caveat, especially for someone studying reception. Naturally, the present always bleeds into our perception of the past, and we must be careful not to let it distort our reading lest we force the ancients into becoming unwilling participants in modern political brawls, spokespeople for ideas foreign to their own. Murray's quote above cautions us against doing so even now. Also, bucking what might appear a current trend in classics, he admits that philology is hardly an exact science, nor should it be. Were Gilbert Murray (1866–1957) alive today, he would likely be an active participant in the familiar world of the classical scholar, as well as a talking head regularly featured on cable television. He would probably have his own blog like Mary Beard; he would write essays for online enterprises like *Eidolon*; he would have produced a MOOC on ancient Greek civilization.¹ In short, Murray was an unabashed popularizer, a scholar whose target audience was not only the intellectual

¹ Beard's blog can be accessed here: <<http://timesonline.typepad.com/>>. *Eidolon*, which advertises itself as “a modern way to write about the ancient world,” can be found here: <<https://medium.com/eidolon>>. Popular massive open online courses (MOOCs) on ancient Greece include Gregory Nagy's *The Ancient Greek Hero*: <<https://www.edx.org/course/ancient-greek-hero-24-hours-harvardx-hum2x>>; and Andrew Szegedy-Maszak's *The Ancient Greeks*: <<https://www.coursera.org/learn/ancient-greeks>>.

elite, but the average person unfamiliar with the Greek world.² This is hardly meant to disparage him or any contemporary classicists who do such things today. Quite the contrary. But I begin with a reminder that Murray, one of the more important and influential classicists of the twentieth century, deemed it of critical importance to bring the classics to the general readership, as well as to use it regularly within discussions of current political and social events. Classical scholarship, he believed, should not be isolated in the ivory tower, and research as defined today was not really a foremost concern in some of his best-known and influential works, especially his later ones.³ In fact, the first sentence of his 1933 work on Aristophanes (the primary subject for my essay) is: "There is little or no research in this book."⁴ Just so, his earliest book addressing Aristophanes, *A History of Ancient Greek Literature* (1897), was written more with a broad readership in mind than graduate students or specialists. As part of the contemporary debate about the place of a classical education, when many people then (like now) were wondering about the practicality of Greek and Latin, Murray maintained that studying Greece was not the same as studying Greek, and that the "Hellenistic spirit" could still be passed on to pretty much anyone.⁵ He felt that "the 'popularization' and 'redistribution' of Greek from the more to the less socially privileged was and remained a near sacred duty."⁶ To him, Greeks needed to appear as real people not unlike moderns, in a way completely different from the aloof, idealized concept of the Greeks that he felt was the prevalent perception of his day. To help achieve this goal, many of his translations of the tragedies, particularly those of Euripides, were produced for stage in America and England as a way to bring the classics to the general population.

I begin with this context about Murray to remind us that although more orthodox scholars may not embrace his approach today, he was undoubtedly one of the most, if not the most, influential scholars of antiquity in his time. Although Murray may be best known for his work on Euripides, this essay will focus exclusively on his critical reception of Aristophanes; how he was a receiver of Aristophanes' texts, how his own studies were col-

2 For the two major biographies of Murray, see West (1984) and Wilson (1987). For a bibliography on him and all his writings, see Arlen (1990) 81–297.

3 See Collard (2007) 104; and Griffith (2007).

4 Murray (1933) vii. I have humbly decided to follow Murray's example for this essay.

5 Wilson (1987) 44: "It is quite possible for a man who cannot read a single page of Plato intelligently to acquire a tolerable proportion of the Greek spirit . . ." See also 151–3; and for Murray's controversial stance towards abolishing the Greek exams at Oxford, see West (1984) 141–2.

6 Wilson (1987) 44. See Arlen (1990) 82.

ored by the political and social climate under which he wrote, as well as his own tastes and goals as a writer. Since such a scholarly colossus casts a large shadow over subsequent writings, I shall try to isolate Murray's leanings at the outset, treating his text historiographically and no differently from, say, the text of Thucydides or Pausanias. In this essay, I do not intend to break down Murray's conclusions about Aristophanes, nor will I evaluate his translations (in text or in performance).⁷ In fact, I want to avoid many of these questions altogether (even if my own opinions, I have no doubt, may sneak in from time to time). Rather, I hope to show where, when, and how his readings appear influenced by his own time period and personal politics (thus violating his own caveat above) in what may now seem jarring from the perspective of roughly a hundred years later. From there, one may be able to investigate how his work altered Aristophanic popular perception and subsequent scholarship. I am also aware of the hubris in this undertaking. After all, I am as much of a product of my own time, steeped in current popular culture and politics as he was of his. And I have a sense of humor that I am all too aware may distort my own reading of Aristophanes, thus possibly turning the comic poet into a cheerleader for my own narrow and narcissistic world view of what is right and good in the world and how comedy ought to interact with it. So, for you, dear reader, forewarned is forearmed. I aim to reexamine Gilbert Murray's Aristophanes with a critical eye but not a judgmental one, and I can only hope that the future reader can treat my analysis of Murray likewise.

Murray's Aristophanes in 1897

Curiously, Murray came rather late to Aristophanes. In his introduction to the 1933 *Aristophanes: A Study*, he says that he was unhappy with his earlier work on the comic poet and that it was only later in life he began to appreciate and understand him.⁸ True, he translated *Frogs* in 1902, but he did not return to translating Aristophanes for another forty-eight years, until the *Birds* of 1950, followed by *Knights* in 1956.⁹ Before this 1933 work, he addressed Aristophanes briefly in a chapter of his 1897 *History of Greek Literature* and then again about twenty years later in a lecture called "Aristophanes and the War Party, A Study in the Contemporary Criticism of the Peloponnesian War" (1919).¹⁰ Neither essay gives us any indication that Murray is particularly enamored of Aristophanes,

7 Others have done this. See Wrigley (2011a).

8 Murray (1933) vi.

9 For his *Frogs*, see Wilson (1987) 78–9 and 88–9.

10 He also wrote a brief introduction to B.B. Rogers' edition of *Thesmophoriazusae* (1904).

although he clearly admires certain elements of his plays. In reference to the contemporary scholarly debates surrounding Aristophanes at the time (such as they were), Murray seems to have held a middle ground, as becomes a popularizer whose primary goals were not necessarily those shared by the academy.¹¹ Their debates, to a large degree, did not really concern him. In any event, at the time some scholars perceived Aristophanes as a political activist working for the aristocracy, whose coarse and bawdy humor (when they caught it) existed merely to pander to the ignorant masses. Other scholars simply did not consider him a serious thinker. To this second group, Aristophanes was only a comic poet competing in a festival who had no real interest in scoring political points. His plays could thus be interpreted as fantastic escapes from reality with no true social commentary. Although Murray seems to have begun his career leaning towards the latter of these two arguments, he became more interested in Aristophanes as a political and social thinker as he aged. But his perception of Aristophanes, as we shall discuss, remained heavily tainted by his own time period and personal leanings.

At the start of his career, Murray's interest in Aristophanes rests primarily upon comedy's overlap with his beloved tragedy, Euripides in particular. His choice of *Frogs* for his first translation thus makes perfect sense. A positive reference to Aristophanes in his 1913 book, *Euripides and His Age*, credits Aristophanes with ability, but only insofar as Aristophanes cannot avoid talking about Euripides in every one of his plays.¹² Although that seems to have been his favorite element in the comedies, Murray was not blind to Aristophanes' other talents. The chapter on Aristophanes in Murray's 1897 book provides us with a handy overview of his opinions of the comic poet and his predilections and biases about them.¹³ First of all, the biographical tradition handed down by the scholiasts and Aristophanes' parabases is read literally and without suspicion, so Aristophanes is thought of as a wealthy aristocrat with land in Aegina, having "prejudices and courage of the independent gentleman" who, because of his life of leisure, had ample time for writing and producing comedy.¹⁴ While Murray is primarily attracted to the political plays, he does not imagine Aristophanes as playing for high stakes whenever he goes after political opponents. *Acharnians* he likes a great deal, but he considers the attacks

11 For this and the state of affairs about Aristophanes scholarship leading up to Murray (and beyond), see Walsh (2009).

12 Murray (1913) 30.

13 For this book's release, the problems surrounding it, and its positive reception by the public, see Wilson (1987) 57–60. For a bibliography and contemporary reviews of it, see Arlen (1990) 101–2.

14 Murray (1897) 281.

on Cleon and Lamachus restrained, while the poet directs his energy towards Euripides.¹⁵ *Knights* and *Wasps* are both singled out for particular praise. Because of the redemption of Demos at the end of *Knights*, the play has some “eloquent and rather noble patriotism,” but the attack against Cleon is “not exactly venomous nor even damaging.”¹⁶ *Birds* is a masterpiece, but a complete escapist fantasy with no true engagement in current political matters.¹⁷ He is predictably inclined towards *Frogs*, but does not see it as a very political play. In fact, he mentions that the lost *Triphales*, a play about Alcibiades written in the window between 411 and *Frogs*, was the “last echo of the political drama of the fifth century.”¹⁸ So like *Birds*, *Frogs* is not actually engaged with Athenian affairs and primarily concerns tragedy, although he says “the parodies are admirable, the analytical criticism childish.”¹⁹ It would be wrong, however, to see the play as a genuine attack on Euripides, whom Murray insists Aristophanes admired. As for *Plutus*, politics are completely out of the picture, and Murray is only concerned with how Old Comedy makes the transition to Middle and New.²⁰

While he has his favorites in 1897, Murray has no problem judging some of the other plays as inferior. *Peace* he dismisses as a “weak *rechauffé* of *Acharnians*,” barely redeemable because of the *Bellerophon* parody.²¹ *Clouds* he deems sloppy and unfinished, only of interest because Socrates takes the stage. The plot arc of a man trying to use sophism to repay debts he finds “not really . . . very happy” and the humor is “rather tame,” thus demonstrating some of his upper-class financial prejudices.²² Because *Lysistrata* and *Thesmophoriazusae* are written “under the shadow of the oligarchy of 411,” he says politics are “unsafe.”²³ This statement denies *Lysistrata* status as a political play with any genuine insights about policy and renders any advice *Lysistrata* offers as fantastical as the advice given in *Birds*. Murray’s non-political interpretation of *Lysistrata* gives him an opening to address one of his least favorite Aristophanic elements: sexual innuendo. Aristophanes only used such humor here, he says, because politics were unavailable to him.²⁴ Murray is clearly extremely uncomfortable

15 Murray (1897) 281–2.

16 Murray (1897) 283. For *Wasps*, see 284–5.

17 Murray (1897) 286–7. He will largely keep the same opinion of this play throughout his career.

18 Murray (1897) 289.

19 Murray (1897) 290.

20 Murray (1897) 291–2.

21 Murray (1897) 285.

22 Murray (1897) 284.

23 Murray (1897) 287.

24 Murray (1897) 287.

even describing critical plot elements.²⁵ His description of the sexual strike states ambiguously that the women “refuse to have any dealings with men.” He avoids any mention of the physical humor and concludes that the jokes are “seldom remarkable for generosity or for refinement.”²⁶ Still, even at this early stage his interpretation of Aristophanes’ view of women is surprisingly modern and comes across as what might now be thought proto-feminist. To him, Aristophanes’ women are hardly targets of attack, but are “perceptively more sensible and more ‘sympathetic’ than his men.”²⁷ “Of course,” he adds, “the emancipation of women was one of the ideas of the time.”²⁸ From the start, he struggles with the play’s sexuality while at the same time applauding its liberal attitudes towards women. While he may persist somewhat in thinking that a woman with savvy political commentary is as crazy as birds guiding policy, his attitude still appears forward thinking for 1897. Murray is careful, though, not to assign Aristophanes too much intellectual credit, granting him only with “superficially (assimilating) most of the advanced thought of his time” and having only “half knowledge.”²⁹ This dissonance about *Lysistrata* at the outset of his first study may well echo in his mind throughout his lifelong relationship with the play. It may also explain why he pulls *Lysistrata* aside for special treatment in his 1933 work (see below) and why he was reputed to be considering a translation of it very late in life.³⁰ Regardless, in his 1897 work, *Lysistrata* gets the most analytical attention of the three “women’s plays.” *Thesmophoriazousae* is briefly discussed in a paragraph for its Euripidean parodies alone, while every element of sexuality, cross-dressing, or bodily humor is purged from the discussion. *Ecclesiazusae* is also dealt with rather harshly, called “the poorest” of Aristophanes’ plays, noteworthy only for its Platonic parallels. Again, Murray delicately avoids any mention of the adult themes and humor.³¹

Still, Murray’s first foray into Aristophanes leaves the reader with a positive impression, if a sanitary one.³² Yes, Murray admits, he often “opposed what was best in his age, or advocated it on the lowest grounds,” that “he only attacks the poor, and the leaders of the poor,” but he did so “with such exuberant high

25 This is typical for the time. See Ruffell (2012). Still, as we shall discuss below, Murray is willing to go to considerable lengths to overlook or explain away Aristophanic elements he perceives as distasteful.

26 Murray (1897) 288.

27 Murray (1897) 288.

28 Murray (1897) 288.

29 Murray (1897) 288.

30 See Walsh (2009) 66.

31 Murray (1897) 290–1.

32 Murray (1897) 292.

spirits, such an air of its all being nonsense together, such insight and swiftness, such incomparable directness and charm of style" that any of his flaws could be forgiven. His indecency, which is Murray's biggest obstacle, is explained away as originating "from that peculiarly Greek *naïveté*, which is the result of simple and unaffected living; partly it has no excuse to urge except that it is not deliberately vicious." So for 1897 Murray, Aristophanes is at his most interesting when he discusses politics or parodies Euripides, but in neither case can we take him too seriously. The comic medium, as well as what Murray all but calls Aristophanes' childishness and immaturity, keeps us from engaging with him on a deeper level.³³ Following the judgment of Plutarch (who follows the lead of Plato), Murray finishes by comparing Aristophanes unfavorably to the largely lost Menander. Even if Aristophanes was interesting to the Alexandrian scholars because he was "full of information about bygone things," his works were museum pieces (if very popular ones), not with the same "refinement and character work . . . plot and sentiment and sobriety" as Menander.³⁴ Still, he concludes, they have "the power of appealing directly to the interest and sympathy of almost every reader."³⁵

Murray's Aristophanes: 1919–33

Over twenty years later, Murray returned to Aristophanes in his short essay *Aristophanes and the War Party*, a lecture given in 1918 (and subsequently published the following year).³⁶ Here, Murray starts to reconsider Aristophanes as a political thinker, especially in light of contemporary European politics. In the preface to his 1902 translation of Euripides, he had more or less compared Cleon to British conservative leaders.³⁷ Once he went so far as to identify Cleon with the modern political party he opposed, it was only a short step to imagine Aristophanes with politics akin to his own. Thus, his primary concerns in the 1918 lecture are *Knights* and Cleon, Aristophanes' stance against Cleon's

33 Murray (1897) 292–3. I think Aristophanes himself anticipated this sort of audience reaction and often addressed it in his parabases when he insists that comedy be taken seriously. Just so, Plato represents him as having this same anxiety in the *Symposium* (189b, 193d–e), when both before and after his speech, he is concerned that because it is funny, it will not be perceived as having any legitimate underlying meaning.

34 Murray (1897) 293.

35 Murray (1897) 293.

36 For the bibliography on this essay and modern reviews, see Arlen (1990) 89–90.

37 Wilson (1987) 76.

policies, and how such comic resistance should be admired and imitated by moderns.³⁸ The quote that begins my essay originated from this lecture. He cautions the reader against projecting too much of oneself onto the past, while maintaining that the past still must be used to interpret present events. Murray realized that he was departing from more orthodox scholarship in his efforts to make the Greeks relatable to the average citizen and would likely encounter criticism for doing so. Unlike many of his contemporaries (and many of ours), he recognizes that classical philology should not be done along the lines of the hard sciences. One must always keep in mind the way the poet manipulates the audience, that proper philology was not “a question of scientific method: it is a question of familiarity with the subject and the language, of humor and of common sense. And it follows that one’s interpretation can never be absolutely certain.”³⁹

For in this 1918 lecture he is hardly subtle about relating antiquity to modernity. The Peloponnesian War becomes a vehicle to consider World War I and vice versa. The modern war, he concludes, turned out “right” (as opposed to the Peloponnesian War), thus bringing about a major victory for his Aristophanes’ way of life. And so, he concludes optimistically, despite the waste of human life and devastation of property and material goods, Europe can recover and, with “cooperation instead of strife, by sobriety instead of madness, by resolute sincerity in public and private things,” the price will not have been paid in vain.⁴⁰

When Murray returns to Aristophanes in 1933, the European world had changed again. His previous optimism transformed into a darker worldview where, perhaps, Aristophanes provided him the means to contemplate the political storm approaching on the horizon.⁴¹ Perhaps it was also due to the rise of excessive nationalism that drew him to a genre that encouraged such a challenge to authority. In any event, he describes his earlier work, as well as the work of his contemporaries, as insufficient, and says that it was now time for him to revisit the comic poet.⁴² One thing that did not change was his 1919 belief that Aristophanes was a useful aid for considering modern affairs. Within the first few pages of his introduction, he mentions not only contemporary English politics, but his fears of the rise of the Nazis and other Fascist

38 Throughout the essay, Murray translates a considerable part of *Knights*, which he then reworked and published in 1956.

39 See Murray (1919) 5–10 and 22.

40 Murray (1919) 46–8.

41 For a bibliography on this book and the contemporary reviews (many negative), see Arlen (1990) 88–9; and West (1984) 216–9.

42 Murray (1933) vii; and West (1984) 217–8.

parties, once again representing Aristophanes as the voice of resistance against such totalitarian regimes.⁴³ Such parallels continue throughout. As we will see, Murray's willingness to consider Aristophanes a political thinker and activist has developed.⁴⁴ While *Aristophanes: A Study* may not have been universally accepted by scholars, his popularizing influence had a subsequent effect on public perception of Aristophanes outside of the academy because his target readership simply was not fellow academics.⁴⁵ The book, however, even if not critical for scholarly study of Aristophanes, provides numerous insights into Murray's own values and interests, as well as how they changed in reference to current events.⁴⁶

The major innovation within Murray's analysis of Aristophanes is his approach to comedy as a form of religious ritual. Here he follows the Cambridge ritualists (such as Jane Harrison, with whom he was friendly, and Francis Cornford) to analyze comedy as part of a fertility ritual that stretches back to Aristotle's *φαλλικά*, existing long before the formalized and plot-driven comedies of Aristophanes.⁴⁷ These rituals, he says, are "embedded in the structure of the play" and appear in the symbolic *γάμος* at the end of each comedy that represents marriage and rejuvenation and thus the year's renewal.⁴⁸ Murray then applies this theory about ritualistic origins to the endings of some of the political comedies. Demos' rejuvenation in *Knights*, then, does not only

43 See Murray (1933) vii; and West (1984) 219, 228–9. Murray dedicates the book to George Bernard Shaw, who he imagines as a contemporary echo of Aristophanes. See Wilson (1987) 316.

44 For example, he compares the *κῶμος* (the root of the word comedy, basically meaning "band of revelers") and *γάμος* ("wedding") at the end of *Peace* with the "revels of London on Armistice Night in 1918" (Murray (1933) 62). Later, however, when trying to show how jokes do not translate well by referring to mockery of contemporaries, he makes his point in almost the opposite way (from our perspective) by referring to his own day (Murray (1933) 86). The ancient is now, at least to this modern reader, far more familiar than the "modern."

45 See West (1984) 219–22. West refers to the book as "probably Murray's worst" and compares Murray to a preacher: "shaping a story to point to a moral." See also Griffith, who speaks of Murray's popularizing influence through his books and lectures across the board, even if he does not spend much time addressing Murray's work on Aristophanes specifically (Griffith (2007) 69–73).

46 Wilson says that the book "... may be more important for the intellectual biography of Murray than for the scholarly study of Aristophanes." Wilson (1987) 316; and Griffith (2007).

47 For modern analyses on Murray's scholarly legacy regarding religion, see Fowler (1989) and Parker (2007). See also West (1984) 217.

48 Murray (1933) 12–3. See Griffith (2007) 70.

indicate political rebellion; it also reflects a ritual regeneration where purged sins and pollutions welcome in a fresh beginning.⁴⁹ The lost *Geras*, which Murray guesses was written shortly after the Peace of Nicias (421 BC), follows a similar pattern, as does the rejuvenation of Philocleon in *Wasps*. Just so, the lost *Amphiarus* of 414 contains the tale of an old man who visits the healing shrine of the hero and recovers his youth (similar in this respect to the plot of *Plutus*).⁵⁰ Even the utopian escapist world of *Birds* now fits into this ritualistic category.⁵¹

This new interpretation of comedy as ritual allowed Murray to speak more frankly, if hesitantly, about comic elements that he formerly had swept under the rug. If comedy was indeed part of ritualized φαλλικά, then the appearance of φαλλοί as part of the costume is therefore not indecent but religious and thus less of a problem. Plays like *Lysistrata* and *Ecclesiazusae* have a stronger phallic element because of their proximity to the ritual, while plays like *Clouds*, *Frogs* and *Birds*, he says, contain fewer phallic traces, whether in plot or in language, even if they contain other ritualistic holdovers.⁵² To one open to the possibility of seeing strong language in these plays, especially after the publication and wide influence of Henderson's *Maculate Muse* (1975), Murray's refusal to see phallic—or any strong—language in these other plays is very surprising. It raises the question as to whether Murray detects certain double entendres and ignores them, or whether he is not aware of them at all. If the latter, how much does his innocence affect his reading of the text?⁵³ Regardless, the ritual connections in the 1933 book give Murray an inroad to address and forgive elements with which he formerly had difficulty. In addition to the ability to address sexuality, what Murray now sees as the ritual loosening of restrictions on polite speech and behavior helps him become an apologist for Aristophanes' unrestricted use of language whenever he engages in political debate in a way distasteful to Murray's sensitivities. Thus, political attacks on individuals, particularly during the parabasis, can now be both politically pointed and bold, but need not seem overly foul and crass.⁵⁴ Murray also uses the "traditional

49 Murray (1933) 138. He refers the reader here back to Cornford (1934) 87–93.

50 Murray (1933) 138–9. For *Amphiarus*, Murray refers to Bergk and Kock, who, he says, on different grounds liken the old man to Demos of *Knights*.

51 Murray (1933) 139.

52 Murray (1933) 8.

53 While it is possible that Murray is suppressing sexual elements for his readership, without any doubt he himself was opposed to obscene language, even in *All Quiet On the Western Front* and certain plays of Shakespeare. See West (1984) 218–9.

54 Murray (1933) 11.

half-magic ritual" of comedy as an explanation for why Aristophanes satirizes the new or unusual on the side of the old and conservative, thus rationalizing Aristophanes' stance against figures like Euripides and Socrates.⁵⁵ His reliance upon ritualistic models continues through his brief discussion of New Comedy. That too, he maintains, contains elements of the κῶμος/γάμος, and the stereotypical lovers' plot is a throwback to the original fertility rites from which comedy developed. In the end he still prefers New Comedy, partly because New Comedy rejected the phallic dances, the adult language, and the political attacks—the first two being things that he also would have liked to have been absent from Aristophanes' plays.⁵⁶

Despite having found religion and borrowing it for interpretation whenever necessary, 1933 Murray is still a strong critic of what he perceives as excessive Athenian piety and backward superstition. This may well be colored by his own views on religion—they certainly read strongly enough to rouse suspicion in one who does not see his claims here as self-evident in the primary sources.⁵⁷ At first, his prejudices seem benign to his textual interpretation, as when he outlines Aristophanes' dislike of prophets and oracle-dealers.⁵⁸ But when addressing the Herm-chopper incident, he creates seemingly *ex nihilo* a class of Athenians who "knew how these phallic figures made the Greeks ridiculous in the eyes of foreigners."⁵⁹ He continues to critique the religious beliefs of the Spartans and Nicias' upcoming blunders in Sicily, mentioning "the repulsion which they inspired among the intelligent."⁶⁰ This openly anti-religious group of Athenians (Murray gives a fair amount of credibility to the existence of those who mocked the mysteries) included both Thucydides and Aristophanes.⁶¹ Given Murray's distaste for phallic imagery, such an attitude would be consistent with his own views, but it seems unjustifiable to project this much anti-religious sentiment onto Aristophanes. Thucydides, with his open skepticism of oracles, perhaps. While Aristophanes undoubtedly makes fun of both corrupt religious peddlers and the gods themselves in *Birds* and

55 Murray (1933) 107.

56 Murray (1933) 238–9.

57 For Murray on religion, see West (1984) 170–1.

58 Murray (1919) 22–4.

59 Immediately before the Sicilian Expedition of 415 BC, all the herms, stone statues of Hermes' head and a set of genitalia, were desecrated by an unknown group. This sacrilege set off a witch hunt that swept Athens and helped bring about the eventual recall of Alcibiades (and thus set in motion the events that led to the disaster in Sicily). See Thucydides 6.27–9.

60 Murray (1933) 141.

61 Murray (1933) 142.

Frogs, such mocking of divinity is typical of Old Attic Comedy, if not necessarily consistent with a Judeo-Christian worldview. It does not, I think, provide enough fodder to support Murray's blanket assumptions. If anything, Aristophanes seems to have a great deal of respect for the Athenian religious tradition (*Acharnians* and *Frogs* provide enough proof, I think), so what we are seeing here reflects Murray's dislikes of his own day, not an unbiased reading of Aristophanes' text.

Still, Murray was committed to these two seemingly disparate readings of Aristophanes and religion. It grants him an Aristophanes required by tradition to include distasteful comic aspects while still allowing him to be a far-sighted intellectual setting himself above the primitive superstitions and outdated rituals of his day. It remains difficult, however, to justify everything Murray dislikes in Aristophanes' comedy via the medium of ritual. Murray's unease is most evident when he addresses the excessive drinking and the strong sexuality in the plays. He says on the first page of *Aristophanes* that the poet's "public spirit and courage . . . (the fact that he) pled for reasonableness and peace throughout a fierce and dangerous period of war fever, (all these things) are hard to reconcile with the indecency of language . . . or occasional foul-mouthed abuse of individuals." Murray's Aristophanes does not approve of indecency. His evidence comes from a few autobiographical claims within the texts, where the comic poet boasts that he cleaned up comedy and made it more reputable.⁶² Murray also trusts the authors of Aristophanes' *Life* and thus credits Aristophanes with having "elevated comedy from a vulgar mass of horse-play and farce to a level of a great art."⁶³ He seems particularly reluctant to imagine that ancient Athens held different tastes about comedy, language, and sexuality than his contemporary Britain and that therefore Aristophanes may have not fit his preconceived notion of what art ought to be.

Murray, as a well-known teetotaler, was also unwilling to accept at face value the drinking that pervades Aristophanic comedy.⁶⁴ Immediately after he refers to the "peculiar inebriety of the mind" that the Greeks showed in worshipping Dionysus, he neatly explains away any drinking within the comic universe as part of the same ritualistic pattern he uses for sexuality. The drinking of the *κῶμος*, he says, aids in the *γάμος*, and thus drinking is a necessary ritualistic means to a higher end.⁶⁵ So the sacred *γάμος* allows for all the drinking, sex, and any other hedonistic (or Dionysian) elements in the plays. Even so,

62 Murray (1933) 10, with references to the relevant passages.

63 Murray (1933) 64.

64 Wilson (1987) 24.

65 Murray (1933) 5–6.

his discomfort is such that he undermines and downplays references to drinking within the actual plot. For example, the celebration of the *Choes* festival by Dicaeopolis and his drunken arrival with prostitutes in the final scenes of *Acharnians* is explained only as part of “a wild and unedifying Komos-Gamos.”⁶⁶ He almost seems apologetic for Demosthenes’ depiction as a drunk in *Knights*, and he says of Bdelycleon and the chorus at the end of *Wasps*, the characters with whom Aristophanes seems to sympathize: “As for a drinking-party, he prefers to keep out of it, and stay quiet. But if by chance he does drink . . . well, people of this degenerate age had better look out!”⁶⁷ As for women and drinking, Murray seems unable even to wrap his mind around the concept (see below).

Murray whitewashes some of the more overtly sexual scenes in the same way; he imagines them all as part of religious elements in the play or as part of the overall γάμος ritual in comedy. Murray’s analysis of part of *Acharnians* provides an example. Dicaeopolis’ daughter is celebrating the phallic feast for the Country Dionysia, so Murray is able to parallel this scene with the current comic contest. At the same time, he remains hesitant to show any of the lewdness that actually occurs in the scene: “the daughter—we are specially told—looking demure and seemly,” which is quite an understatement given the language and descriptions in the original text (lines 241–72).⁶⁸ But Murray does not just downplay the sexuality; sometimes he ignores it completely, and it leads him to an interpretation that seems at odds with the humor within it. His description of the Megarian scene (729–817) follows shortly thereafter. He shows no awareness at all that there are any dirty double entendres to the “piggies” being “skewered on a spit.”⁶⁹ Instead, oddly enough, Murray reads this scene as evidence of Aristophanes’ deep sensitivity to the plight of the Megarians. Likewise, Murray brushes away any strongly sexualized readings of the end scenes of both *Acharnians* and *Wasps*, other than to fit them into his γάμος theory. It would be difficult to see these scenes as true weddings of any kind, but Murray will not have it any other way. Sometimes Murray ignores sexuality so aggressively that he needs to rewrite the plays in question, regardless of whether doing so tampers with Aristophanes’ text.⁷⁰ More importantly,

66 Murray (1933) 38.

67 Murray (1933) 51.

68 For other expurgated versions of this scene, see Ruffell (2012) 27–30.

69 See Ruffell (2012) 31–2.

70 For an extreme example of sanitization and how it might change interpretation, here is his description of the interaction between the Archer and the Flute Girl at the end of *Thesmophoriazousae*: “. . . and he (Euripides) returns presently . . . with a young dancing girl, who has to practice for a public performance. The girl’s shoe has come undone, she

by sanitizing the text for his own taste (or that of the masses), Murray's own political and religious interpretations bleed in more easily. Nor is it only sexual humor that gets axed (or explained away by reference to ritual). Murray does away with some of Aristophanes' non-sexual bodily and scatological humor, often without commentary.⁷¹ In the final analysis, even when he leans upon a ritual explanation, Murray cannot accept Aristophanes' strong language, nor can he consider that either a modern or civilized society could embrace such words and concepts.⁷² This unfortunately can keep him distant from Aristophanes' genuine comic vision, as well as his political or social leanings.

Murray believed that such distasteful additions were holdovers from the original Dionysian ritual and Aristophanes only reluctantly put them in to keep from being "too priggish and high-toned a preacher . . . lest they (the audience) think him a bore and a scold."⁷³ He has little-to-no support for this interpretation from ancient texts, but parallels can be drawn from Murray's own experiences as a child, as he seems to have been deeply troubled by foul language at his boarding school. Not only was Murray bullied, but he also felt peer-pressured to use foul language.⁷⁴ For Murray, Aristophanes only speaks the way he does (if not for religious responsibility and respect for tradition) in order to pander to the lower-classes and the less intelligent—in other words, the bullies of Murray's youth.⁷⁵

Murray's Aristophanes also almost appears oddly homophobic, at least from our current modern sensitivities to homosexuality. His hesitancy to examine this sexual inclination leads him to some odd textual interpretations. For example, within Murray's depiction of Aristophanes' strong hatred of Cleon, he mentions that the two of them would have been united in their

must sit down to fasten it up, and there is nothing to sit upon but the Scythian's knee. The Scythian kindly helps with the shoe, is fascinated and eventually goes off the stage for a moment with the girl . . ." (Murray (1933) 116–7).

71 For his discussions of graphic bodily humor in *Peace*, *Frogs* and *Ecclesiazusae*, see Murray (1933) 57, 128, 160, 191–2, and 196–7.

72 Murray (1933) 219–20.

73 Murray (1933) 38.

74 Wilson, citing Murray's unfinished autobiography, recounts how Murray had to make "a bargain with the powers above. I had a strong objection to obscene language, but . . . though I might satisfy popular feeling by swearing, I did it entirely as a matter of calculation. I got little or no pleasure from it but in order to be less unpopular, I deliberately swore at every second sentence" (Wilson (1987) 6).

75 It seems Murray was unhappy enough at boarding school because of this extreme bullying to even consider suicide (Wilson (1987) 7).

mutual distaste for male/male eros.⁷⁶ Murray even can depict homosexuality as synonymous with “personal immorality”; he says as much when he notes that Euripides and Socrates are not attacked for their personal immorality, while Agathon “most emphatically” is.⁷⁷ Yet he never actually mentions that Agathon was indeed homosexual, and the text is so circumlocutory that, as it stands, it is unclear as to whether or not Murray accepts Agathon’s inclination even in *Thesmophoriazusae* (Plato notwithstanding).⁷⁸ Murray’s analysis of Cleisthenes focuses upon him as only “the beardless friend of woman,” avoiding the clear homosexual jokes while claiming that the real reason Aristophanes is out to get him is because of his political stance as a sycophant and orator.⁷⁹

On the positive side, Murray defends Aristophanes against the negative reputation he perceives the poet currently had among his (Murray’s) contemporaries. To Murray, Aristophanes is “gallant” in his humorous attacks rather than spiteful and is capable of producing superior literary works containing a significant philosophical element.⁸⁰ Although to Murray’s eye moderns turn away from his coarse language and assume his barbed attacks are designed to take down those he criticizes (Euripides, Socrates, women), his Aristophanes had a much more humane comic sensibility. This grants us room to believe today that some of his own censorship of Aristophanes in his scholarly books and subsequent translations was not solely due to his own squeamishness, but to address his concerns that there was no other way to transfer Aristophanes’ raw genius to the mass audience that Murray felt the poet deserved. As the representative of all that was best at Athens, Murray’s Aristophanes does not just attack whomever he hates; rather, his criticisms of Athenian society are in the name of political, social, and philosophical justice.⁸¹ Comedy, then, served a social function for both religion and state by arguing for justice and

76 Murray (1933) 45.

77 Murray (1933) 108.

78 Murray (1933) 112. He even says later that Agathon would have laughed away these “mischievous onslaughts” that only occurred because of Agathon’s beardlessness (Murray (1933) 161).

79 Murray (1933) 161–2. See also Lysias xxv.25.

80 Murray (1933) viii.

81 In discussing Aristophanes’ attack on Cleon, Murray talks of Aristophanes’ vision of Athens as an ideal society, living as they did in the days of Aristides the Just: “It is, with individual variations, the ideal of Thucydides and Euripides; it is derived from that of Aeschylus and Herodotus, and it leads by an historical process to that of Plato” (Murray (1933) 56). Although it is tempting to see that Murray sees in Aristophanes an idealized self-portrait, I agree with both of his biographers that this would be taking it too far. Rather, one can see how Murray’s self-image drew him to certain elements he also saw

perspective and by providing a release for pent up rage at societal iniquity (or, perhaps, sexual frustration or cravings for alcohol). To Murray, Aristophanes was raised in a "somewhat old fashioned gentlemanly style, which laid stress on good manners, respect for the aged, and conventional piety." The Athenian youth were less "strait-laced" and lacked piety, were ignorant of Homer and good literature, filled with legal intrigues and seduced by the sophists. Thus, Murray identified Aristophanes' genuine personality primarily with the dramatic voices of his older heroes.⁸² In his reading of *Wasps*, the chorus and Bdelycleon are the sort of people that Aristophanes "liked and championed"—men from the country like the chorus of *Acharnians*.⁸³ When Aristophanes criticizes people from this socially conservative view, he does so only to correct their morals in a good-natured way, all for the good of the state.

It is in this light that Murray re-approaches Aristophanes' Socrates in *Clouds*. On the one hand, this Socrates seems more akin to the historical Socrates than what might be acceptable today.⁸⁴ He also accepts (from *Phaedo* 96a–e) that Socrates had indeed studied natural phenomena in his youth, which lends credibility to the larger religious charges against Socrates described in the *Apology*.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, Murray does not believe that the play is fundamentally anti-Socrates. Instead, the target is what he calls a "clash of humours" that takes place when the low-brow Strepsiades goes to school where "... he is not the mocker, but the butt."⁸⁶ The fault that Plato has Socrates place on *Clouds* in the *Apology*, for Murray, does not translate into genuine blame for a comic poet whose intentions were pure. His explains the rewritten new scenes in the never-produced second *Clouds* by saying Aristophanes put in more hostility towards Socrates as a sort of crowd-pleaser.⁸⁷ This sort of pandering to the masses once again provides Murray a way of apologizing for passages he does not prefer.

in Aristophanes—perhaps in a distorted way, or perhaps not. See Wilson (1987) 316; and West (1984) 218.

82 Murray (1933) 19–20.

83 Murray (1933) 82–3.

84 Socrates has a school with a common table and keeps vows of poverty. He also is shoeless, cloakless, can endure hunger and cold, thus consistent with the Socrates as depicted by Alcibiades in Plato's *Symposium*. See Murray (1933) 92–3 and 97.

85 Murray (1933) 93.

86 Murray (1933) 94–7.

87 Murray (1933) 104–5. He ultimately concludes that these changes worsened what was "not perhaps a very good play... not really very funny, nor compared with the *Knights* very exciting."

Not surprisingly, Murray's take on Aristophanes' perception of Euripides is equally positive. To him, literature was Aristophanes' top priority, even when parodying it. Tragedy (particularly Euripidean tragedy) fascinated Aristophanes, even as he disapproved of it—or at least felt bound to disapprove of it due to the ritual constrictions of the comic festival.⁸⁸ Even though Aristophanes mocks Euripides' poetry, Murray notes how he never attacks his personal character or honor.⁸⁹ The genuine criticism of Euripides' art lies in how the poet tries to make tragedy more "real" while still using a formal and ritualistic convention.⁹⁰ He does not, however, see the parodies of *Thesmophoriazusae* as anything but a tremendous complement to Euripides.⁹¹ He even comments on how, although each of the other characters is treated in some humiliating way, Euripides alone is spared such mistreatment.⁹² In *Frogs*, which Murray considers Aristophanes' best work, he applauds the poet's willingness to make a more intellectual play (as opposed to the failed *Clouds*). Athens now has a more intellectual audience, the cause of which, Murray suggests, was that "new learning" of Euripides.⁹³ Euripides, like Murray, brings art and literature to the people, and Aristophanes, another fellow popularizer, both detects and condones this. To Murray, the three of them are united in a common goal vis à vis Greek literature and its relationship to the average citizen. Even if Aeschylus does emerge victorious in the underworld contest, *Frogs* is in no way a blanket condemnation of Euripides.⁹⁴ Murray grants Aristophanes one legitimate criticism, however, namely that Euripides was altering an

88 Murray (1933) 107–8. Later he remarks that "... there is always a twinkle of good-nature in his most mischievous onslaughts upon artists. A passing accusation of unnatural vice, based on a poet's treatment of anapests or his absence of a beard, would no doubt be taken by Agathon and others in the spirit in which it was meant" (Murray (1933) 161).

89 Murray (1933) 108. I am not sure I can agree with this statement so easily.

90 Murray (1933) 112. This, I suspect, is in line with his own insistence on translation in poetry, not prose. I wonder if he thus attempts to translate Euripides' more "realistic" Greek diction into what he imagines is a higher poetic level in English, more similar to Aeschylus'. In other words, does he correct Euripides' "fault" as he does Aristophanes' foul language? He certainly insisted that all his translations for the stage be metrical in order to keep a sense of elevation. See Wilson (1987) 89.

91 Murray (1933) 117–8.

92 I am not sure the text bears out this interpretation, but I suppose it depends on what one deems humiliating.

93 Murray (1933) 118–9. His reading of the political debate of the end of *Frogs* (119–20) cuts through the textual problems to represent Euripides as echoing Murray's own interpretation of Aristophanes' political opinions.

94 Murray (1933) 121–9. Among other things, Murray dismisses the "lost his little oil can" mockery taken seriously by scholiasts.

established religious rite through innovations in both tragedy and music.⁹⁵ But that was it. Murray insists that Aristophanes in no way condemned Euripides on immoral grounds. His Aristophanes is first and foremost σοφός, an intellectual and literary man, one who particularly laments the contemporary neglect of literature: "Even his politics are the politics of a literary man, greatly moved by the spirit of a policy, its cruelty, its unfairness, its vulgarity, and not so much by its material results."⁹⁶

In terms of politics, as in his earlier works, Murray seems most pleased about Aristophanes' firm anti-war stance, unique among the other comic poets of his day.⁹⁷ He elaborates on ideas already introduced in his 1897 chapter and 1919 essay by idealizing Aristophanes' attacks on Cleon in *Acharnians*, *Knights* and *Wasps* and celebrating Aristophanes' internal narrative as a solitary defender against a war-mongering demagogue, the lone voice for sanity and peace.⁹⁸ Murray sees Aristophanes as a Panhellenist humane caretaker, rallying for both the allies and the islanders.⁹⁹ Such political stances are entirely consistent with Murray's character as parodied in Shaw's *Major Barbara*.¹⁰⁰ Aristophanes' feud with Cleon is thus incredibly noble and brave. We (Murray's contemporaries) read the play too much in the void, he thinks, outside of the politics, enjoying the "gallant laughter," but blind to the tragedy that lies behind it: "... we hardly appreciate the facts because we are so beguiled by the words."¹⁰¹ On his most positive read of Cleon, Murray uses one single passage from *Frogs* (575–8) to compare him with Tammany Hall insofar as he may have taken care of the poor, but barring that, Murray accepts Aristophanes' (and Thucydides') portrayal of him entirely.¹⁰² Once his enemy dies, Aristophanes' political stance weakens. After the Peace of Nicias began and immediately after started to unravel, Murray's Aristophanes, who hated war more than any of his

95 Murray (1933) 125 and 129–33.

96 Murray (1933) 106.

97 Murray (1933) 66–8.

98 Murray (1933) 33. *Knights* consistently remains one of Aristophanes' best plays for Murray, an opinion that does not seem common today. Murray eventually published a translation of *Knights* (much of which he already had translated for his 1919 essay) in 1956.

99 Murray (1933) 47, 60, 67, and 75. Murray himself seems to have believed that Athens' treatment of her allies was "harsh and unscrupulous exploitation," which means that now he and Aristophanes (as he reads him) were on the same page (Murray (1919) 21). See also Murray (1919) 27–31 and Arlen (1990) 83.

100 Murray's hypotheses about Cleon as a war profiteer reveals even more echoes. Murray (1933) 42–3. For Murray in *Major Barbara*, see Macintosh (1998).

101 Murray (1933) 40–1.

102 Murray (1933) 44–5.

contemporaries, became jaded and turned to escapist utopias like *Birds*.¹⁰³ As he said before (and will say again), Murray interprets *Birds*, while it does contain many personal attacks, as a critique against poor literature and religious frauds, not against current politics.¹⁰⁴

Murray separates *Lysistrata* out for special treatment towards the end of his work, and he may have reconsidered this play more than any other in the thirty-year period since he last discussed Aristophanes in print. He appears more at peace with the overt sexuality that seemed irksome elsewhere in Aristophanes' work. Now he sees it as part of the "spirit of feverish license and pleasure-seeking which often accompanies the shedding of much blood" by comparing Athens in 411 to post-World War I Europe (and post-Revolution France).¹⁰⁵ Clearly, Murray's real world war experience altered his own perspective, and given his own 1919 advice to scholars of Aristophanes, he needed to revisit his early interpretation under the new circumstances. To 1933 Murray, *Lysistrata* was "half-farcical, half-tragic," the product of a "heavy-hearted . . . and almost bitter" Aristophanes.¹⁰⁶ True, as in earlier analyses, Murray is cagy by modern standards when talking about sexuality, but in revisiting *Lysistrata*, he addresses the topic more boldly than in the past even while still censoring elements of which he does not morally approve. For example, he remains opposed to alcohol, so he discusses the women's oath over the wine basin without commenting on the comic stereotype of drunken women (he calls it again "the Athenian women's substitute for tea").¹⁰⁷ At this later date, it is still unclear as to whether this is dry humor or the humor of a dry individual, but regardless, Aristophanes' portrayal of women enjoying their wine remains suppressed. And even though Murray now senses the tragedy behind *Lysistrata*, he still interprets the play as "farce." Thus, the sexuality of the play is once again something Aristophanes feels obliged to perform as part of the phallic festival. It is, Murray says, "indecent and more than indecent" while the "*phallus erectus* is treated as a kind of symbol, standing for all the thwarted desires and expectations that would arise in men alienated from their womankind."¹⁰⁸ He now understands the phallic humor in the Kinesias scene (845–979), but he avoids

103 Murray (1933) 136–7.

104 Murray (1933) 156–9. When Murray revisits *Birds* in 1950, very little of his analysis changes. See Murray (1950) 5–10.

105 Murray (1933) 165.

106 Murray (1933) 164–5. He later refers to the "tension of feeling" (I cannot tell if this is meant to be funny—probably not) and the play's "closeness to tragedy" (which clearly is not).

107 Murray (1933) 167.

108 Murray (1933) 167.

speaking about it directly. Nor will he state the matter at hand for the Spartan Herald (980–1013).¹⁰⁹ I am also unsure as to whether he comprehends some of the double entendres of the scene with Reconciliation (1112–88), or whether he just avoids mentioning them.¹¹⁰ His distaste for certain elements also manifests when he discusses modern performances of which he clearly disapproves. To him, these “daring” (their word, not his) performances “achieve little” because they lack the ritualistic background where the phallus is properly contextualized as an object of fertility. Without that context, he says, the play is “consciously obscene”—which is not, he insists, Aristophanes’ intent.¹¹¹

So while more willing to consider the play because he can effectively contextualize and explain away difficulties, Murray is also able to reinterpret it and give it the same respect he does the other political plays. He now takes seriously the advice of Lysistrata rather than dismissing it as the babbling of a fantastical woman, possibly the largest shift from his earlier analysis.¹¹² He describes her as having “a touch of the heroic,” with dignity “uncompromised.”¹¹³ Now, in what seems like a surprisingly modern analysis of Aristophanes, Lysistrata (and women in general) are compared with Socrates and Euripides as characters having the poet’s sympathies.¹¹⁴ Murray’s cautiousness about sex aside, he is very conscious of the darkness of *Lysistrata* in contrast to *Acharnians* and *Peace*—a darkness that shows Athens’ desperation this late in the war and her need to reconcile with Sparta before a mutual self-destruction.¹¹⁵ The combination of the tragic background of *Lysistrata* with the comic side is for him a recipe for a truly great play. It therefore makes sense that he was considering translating the play after World War II. I imagine the recent political events only strengthened his 1933 interpretation.

109 Murray (1933) 173–4.

110 Murray (1933) 174–5.

111 Murray (1933) 179–80.

112 Murray (1933) 171 and 174–5. It is interesting to see parallels between his interpretation of Lysistrata and Greek women with his own fairly liberal (for the time) partnership with his own wife, particularly in the classroom. See Wilson (1987) 44–8; and Arlen (1990) 83.

113 Murray (1933) 178. This translates into her never lying, wanting to drink, or even having her own husband or lover. Her one use of “coarse” language is “a brutal truth rather than a joke.”

114 Murray (1933) 179.

115 Murray (1933) 176–7.

Murray's Aristophanes: Some Conclusions

Murray closes his 1933 book with Aristophanes' two post-Peloponnesian War plays *Ecclesiazusae* and *Plutus*. He remained unimpressed with both as works of literature, important only for their role in the transition from Old to Middle/New Comedy. The *Ecclesiazusae*, he says, is a product of "an ageing or an over-tired man," indicative of Aristophanes' discouraged attitude towards current politics and defeated perspective after the war's end.¹¹⁶ Despite Aristophanes' innovations toward Middle Comedy, his intellectual and political edge had dulled.¹¹⁷ The Athenian audience, he says, could "no longer quite stomach the Old Comedy, with its reckless language, its personal abuse, its concentration on great public issues, and its personal idealism," due in part to its post-war financial depression.¹¹⁸ He does, however, maintain a proto-feminist streak, for he describes Chremylus' wife as "the first comic female character in Greek literature . . . the first woman who is made funny not because of her sex, but because of her character."¹¹⁹ *Plutus* remained popular with the ancients only because of its similarities to Menander and because it was "less offensive" to a later audience "which was really repelled and bewildered" by Old Comedy.¹²⁰ Aristophanes' "puns and horseplay and old-fashioned jokes" had become "tedious" to a "more sophisticated society."¹²¹

In his final section, Murray builds on Aristophanes' ancient critics and negative reception when compared with Menander. He begins with Aristotle, who to Murray, agrees that Aristophanes was not "highly civilized" or "urbane" enough.¹²² Building upon *Nicomachean Ethics* (1127b33), Murray describes laughter in terms of a moral in-between. Those who seek too much are "buffoons and vulgar, who care more about raising a laugh than what is seemly and not hurting the feelings of the object of the joke."¹²³ The middle is "tact,"

¹¹⁶ Murray (1933) 181.

¹¹⁷ Murray (1933) 183–5. He is, however, slightly impressed with *Ecclesiazusae*'s overlap with the *Republic*. Murray believes that Aristophanes had seen an earlier draft of Plato's work and is mocking it in good fun (Murray (1933) 187, 189). However, the obscenity that remains in the play belongs to the "literature of fatigue," and he dismisses *Plutus* as a "bloodless performance" (Murray (1933) 198, 199, 207).

¹¹⁸ Murray (1933) 199–200.

¹¹⁹ Murray (1933) 203–4.

¹²⁰ Murray (1933) 210–1.

¹²¹ Murray (1933) 211.

¹²² Murray (1933) 212.

¹²³ Murray (1933) 213.

a quality Aristotle considers fitting for a decent person. While Old Comedy was vulgar, New Comedy was decent and tactful. Because (according to Aristotle) Old Comedy caused pain for the person under attack, Murray remained troubled by what his contemporaries saw as Aristophanes' harshness against his comic targets. His book-long construction of Aristophanes is quick to forgive attacks on Socrates, Euripides, and women, while still justifying and contextualizing his attacks on Cleon. By claiming Aristotle (and later, Plutarch's essay) as a supporter of his tastes, Murray provides himself with a powerful ally for what he already believed.¹²⁴ As Murray accurately points out, there is almost no positive criticism of Aristophanes in antiquity. He attempts to respond to the resounding negativity, admitting that Aristotle, with aesthetic standards based on Menander and New Comedy, would have had a powerful hold on subsequent thinkers, just as Murray's judgments were to have on his sizable popular audience in the early twentieth century. His public reputation as a poet, dramatist, and scholar unabashedly brought ancient literature into modern political dialogue. Even when his perception of Aristophanes may be colored by his own ideology, without any doubt, Aristophanes would have approved of his overarching goal: to make the comedies part of the vibrant (and urgent) contemporary discourse. In this respect, I cannot agree with Murray more. Classics, to survive, needs to recapture that relevancy. We would do well, in this respect, to make Murray our model.

Aristophanes' career ends with the following summary, a fair account of Murray's analysis of his entire work:

In his youth he saw undreamed-of possibilities in the rude phallic dance and song which was the Komos of Dionysus. At first he hardly cared to appear on the stage himself, but he wrote Comedies, gradually purifying and intellectualizing the strange performance without ever losing its boisterous fun or reducing its intense vitality; he raised its invective from mere orgies of comic abuse to expressions of high political indignation and even idealism; he fought against overwhelming odds for the cause of justice or generosity, towards the Athenian allies, for what he considered the old spirit of Aristides, and most of all for peace. He was defeated in public affairs, so he turned more exclusively towards art and poetry and perfected his instrument—an instrument peculiar to one place and time and never rediscovered in human history. He saw this instrument decay and break in his hands, made impossible partly by lack of public funds, partly by the ever-increasing reign of fear in politics, partly by that rise

124 Murray (1933) 214–5.

in the level of refinement in which he himself had been made the prime mover. He became tired and made compromises, but on the whole still wrote plays which would have been hailed as works of genius if he had not done so much better before. He retired at last from the stage, with a last play, quiet, good-natured, and showing no bitterness at a world that imagined it had outgrown him.¹²⁵

He credits Aristophanes with “sublimity, creative power, unexpectedness, wild humor (and) poetic imagination,” not going so far as to say Aristophanes has “genius,” but granting him “an exuberance of life.”¹²⁶ The work has a “carelessness of writing or construction, violence, lack of proportion, offenses against strict canons of taste,” but Aristophanic poetry still can “achieve a positive beauty of expression which is denied to most of the less faulty and less vital artists.”¹²⁷ If Aristophanes had no other scholar to eulogize him, and future critics were left with nothing but Murray to guide us, he could have far worse of an epitaph.

¹²⁵ Murray (1933) 209–10.

¹²⁶ Murray (1933) 218–9.

¹²⁷ Murray (1933) 219.

“Attic Salt into an Undiluted Scots”: Aristophanes and the Modernism of Douglas Young¹

Gregory Baker

No bein' fit to write in Greek,
I wrote in Lallan;
Dear to my heart as the peat-reek,
Auld as Tantallon.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON, *excerpted from “The Maker to Posterity”*

After performing an “exacting part” in Robinson Jeffers’ free adaptation of *Medea* at the 1948 Festival, a Glaswegian actress named Eileen Herlie (1918–2008) amused local reporters with her thoughts on the dramatic merit of Scots vernacular, also known as Lallans.² Though “overcome with exhaustion,” Herlie was eager “to discuss the possibilities of translating Greek tragedy into braid Scots shortly after she left the stage.”³ She wanted to know above all “how her tragic lines would sound in Scots but had decided that Greek tragedy did not lend itself to Scots.”⁴ Herlie’s interest in the creative potential of Lallans was not unusual that summer. Perhaps at no other time had there been such broad, public interest in Scots literature than at the 1948 Edinburgh Festival. Its most stirring event had been, after all, a popular revival of David Lyndsay’s satirical Scots drama, *Ane Pleasant Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* (1540). The adaptation of this play, completed by Robert Kemp (1908–67) and directed by Tyrone Guthrie (1900–71), was acclaimed a triumph by local newspapers, a triumph because it demonstrated before a wide audience the semantic richness and range of literary register still alive in Scots vernacular. This success led many to wonder

1 I am grateful to Clara Young and the estate of Douglas Young for allowing me to quote from his unpublished correspondence held at the National Library of Scotland. Citation information for these letters and others can be found at the end of the chapter. Thanks are due also to Margery Palmer McCulloch, Kenneth Haynes, Philip Walsh, and Taryn Okuma, each of whom offered helpful comments and suggestions for revising this piece.

2 Anon. (1948) 4.

3 Anon. (1948) 4.

4 Anon. (1948) 4.

what else Lallans might do for modern drama. The day following the staging of *Medea*, the report which appeared in *The Scotsman* readily took up Herlie's discussion of Scots and its dramatic potential. The language of Attic tragedy was indeed a poor match for Scots translation, the editor noted: "One must agree with Miss Herlie there, but would the same hold true of comedy? Would it, for instance, be possible to render Aristophanes into Scots?"⁵ According to *The Scotsman*, Greek comedy could be effectively performed before audiences at future festivals in Edinburgh, for there was renewed desire for Scots translations of the classics. When Aristophanes did finally appear before Scottish audiences in the late 1950s, however, his work emerged as a contested site, a site in which powerful political as well as linguistic forces from the contemporary moment were at work. Marked indelibly with the ideological disputes of modern nationalism, Scotland's Aristophanes was caught in a struggle of style and politics, a struggle that enmeshed him in the country's complex relationship with international modernism and the literary avant-garde.

For Aristophanes to arise in modern Britain—for him to find voice in twentieth-century poetry—a capable translator conversant in both Attic Greek and braid Scots was required. *The Scotsman* insisted on only one man: Douglas Cuthbert Colquhoun Young (1913–73), the scholar; Lallanophone poet; one-time chairman of the Scottish National Party (SNP) and at the time a lecturer in Latin at University College, Dundee: "Mr. Douglas Young, who converts Attic into the Doric with great assiduity, might have a shot at presenting us with a Lallans version of the *Birds* or the *Thesmaphoriazusae*."⁶ Young's reputation as a poet preceded him. His verse had first appeared in the early 1940s, emerging in a second wave of interest in the revival of literary Scots. From the beginning, Young attempted—like many of his Scottish contemporaries, among them Sydney Goodsir Smith (1915–75), George Campbell Hay (1915–84), Robert McLellan (1907–85), Robert Garioch (1909–81) and William Soutar (1898–1943)—to write in an experimental, synthetic form of Scots, a language which had its first, and perhaps most innovative expression in the poetry of

5 Anon. (1948) 4. On 3 September 1948, *The Scotsman* issued a correction noting the suggestion "that Aristophanes might go rather well into Braid Scots was belated." The English barrister and scholar, Benjamin Bickley Rogers (1828–1919) had already used the language in his 1910 edition of *Acharnians*. Rogers employed Scots vernacular, however, only in the dialogue of the Megarian. His translation, though now regarded as "prudishly Victorian," was well-known at the time, being part of a six-volume edition which eventually served as the basis for the 1924 Loeb Aristophanes. On Rogers' translations and reputation, see Van Steen (2014) 437; and Robson and Walsh in this volume.

6 Anon. (1948) 4.

Hugh MacDiarmid during the interwar years. Young, however, was not simply a disciple of MacDiarmid; he was also an accomplished classical scholar and linguist. Following a formal education at St Andrews and New College, Oxford, he taught classics at universities across Scotland while researching the complex manuscript history of the archaic elegist, Theognis of Megara. Theognis, he believed, had been left to languish amongst "the cobwebs of the committee-room," his Greek "pigeon-holed by nineteenth-century German fantasies."⁷ Young set out to revive his reputation, returning his poetry to its rightful place among "the indispensables of a liberal education."⁸ "Why?" he asked,

Because Theognis had a mind of his own and he spoke it, on matters of general as well as of personal interest. As such a spokesman he is a social and historical "document" of the first importance, all the more so that he is the most substantial relic of personal literature from the aristocratic particularist age, before Athenian national socialism and Macedonian dynastic imperialism.⁹

An unconventional mind of such importance could not to be ignored, he believed, and so Young spent years at work on the Teubner edition of Theognis, while chronicling his efforts to track down the poet's manuscripts in a memoir entitled, *Chasing An Ancient Greek: Discursive Reminiscences of an European Journey*.¹⁰

At first, however, Young did not come to public prominence on account of his scholarship or his poetry. In the early 1940s, he became known rather as a left-of-center political controversialist and an ardent opponent of conscription in Scotland.¹¹ Following passage of a second National Service (Armed Forces) Act in December 1941 [4 and 5 Geo. VI, c. 15], Parliament enlarged the scope of the draft instituted under the first Act in September 1939 [2 and

⁷ Young (1950) 2.

⁸ Young (1950) 1.

⁹ Young (1950) 2.

¹⁰ Young after Diehl (1961); and Young (1950).

¹¹ Young did not oppose conscription on pacifist grounds. He believed that by right only Scotland's government could draft Scottish men and women into military and industrial service. Like some Scottish nationalists, Young was ambivalent about opposition to Hitler and Nazism. He threw his support behind the anti-war organization, the Scottish Neutrality League, and sometimes wondered whether German success in England might benefit Scottish interests in the long term. For these and other reasons, British authorities suspected Young of subversive activity and raided his home in Aberdeen on the 3rd of May 1941. See Bowd (2013).

3 Geo. VI, c. 81]. Under the terms set out in 1941, British men age 18 to 51, as well as unmarried women (including childless widows) age 20 to 30, could be called up for active military service.¹² In early 1942 Young, then 28 years old, received his orders: he was to report for a routine medical examination pursuant to conscription. Despite poor health—health which likely would have disqualified him from active duty—Young refused to report. Instead he began a sustained attack on conscription, first claiming that the “so-called United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was a legal non-entity”; that its “fundamental charter,” the Treaty of Union, possessed “no exclusive undisputed control over all persons and things in its pretended territory” in Scotland.¹³ When that proved unpersuasive, Young insisted that conscription violated the terms executed by the 1707 Treaty of Union itself. As he saw it, Article 18 of the Union with England Act both expanded and restricted the authority of Parliament with respect to certain areas of Scottish law. The Treaty empowered Westminster to alter “Laws which concern publick Right Policy and Civil Government” in Scotland.¹⁴ However, in matters of “private right,” the Treaty had set, he asserted, rigorous limits on British intervention, leaving untouched the tradition of Scottish common law: “no alteration” could be made in that area “except for evident utility of the subjects within Scotland.” For Young, the burden of conscription, whether for military or industrial purposes, contravened private right and offered no clear benefit to Scottish men and women, a people who had too often been victim to “the ludicrous blundering” of the British:

It is no service to Scotland to follow the misleadership of the British government and become a prisoner at St Valery-en-Caux or at Singapore or elsewhere. Scots troops have played the part of Uriah the Hittite often enough already in Great Britain's wars, and it is now high time the Scots decided to fight for Scots independence, following the example of the Serbs, the Norse, and other self-respecting nations.¹⁵

For refusing conscription Young stood trial, first in April 1942 and then again for a second offence in June 1944. In both instances his defense was heard, his

12 On the domestic impact of the second National Service Act, see Broad (2006) 223–8; and Royle (2013).

13 Young (1942) 11.

14 The text of the Act of 1707 can be accessed here: <www.legislation.gov.uk/aosp/1707/7/introduction>.

15 Young (1942) 11, 4.

learning admired, but the case was never in doubt. No court would uphold the notion that a Scotsman could escape the draft through a decidedly enigmatic reading of British legal history. Young was therefore found guilty at both trials, and sentenced to serve 12 months in 1942 and 8 months in 1944.

Despite his failure to persuade the court, the conscription crisis made Young a hero to many in Scotland. His erudition and impassioned defense of Scottish sovereignty galvanized the more radical elements at work in the SNP. With a surge in popular support at his back, he won in May 1942—just weeks before he was imprisoned—a narrow election for the chairmanship of the party in Aberdeen. His victory, however, came at a cost: Young's election split the SNP, driving out many moderates including William Power (1873–1951), his opponent, and "King John" MacCormick (1904–61), both of whom thought greater cooperation in the war effort a more certain path to home rule. But for Young and those remaining in the party, there would be no compromise: Scots troops could no longer be used as "coolies to labour for an alien imperialism."¹⁶ The election was also a watershed moment for another, albeit less obvious, reason. Young's rise within the party helped return to prominence the poet, Christopher Murray Grieve (1892–1978), better known by his pseudonym, Hugh MacDiarmid.¹⁷ Later when looking back at Scottish politics in this period, Young declared MacDiarmid proof of "Shelley's dictum that 'poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.'"¹⁸ MacDiarmid's emergence in the 1920s had set off a "renewed awareness of Scottish nationality," and "through his poetry and his countless provocative polemics," MacDiarmid had helped foment a literary renaissance in Scotland, one predicated on a radical form of linguistic nationalism.¹⁹ This took shape first in the 1922 publication of "The Watergaw," a short poem in which MacDiarmid worked to create from the scattered dialects of Lallans a heteroglossic literary language he called synthetic Scots. Separate from English and from Highland Gaelic, synthetic Scots was to be "a form of Doric," he claimed, "which is no dialect in particular, but a new

¹⁶ Young (1942) 4.

¹⁷ MacDiarmid had initiated the so-called "Scottish Renaissance" in the early 1920s, a literary revolution for the Scots language. However, after having been expelled from the ranks of the National Party of Scotland (forerunner of the SNP) in May 1933, he spent much of the 1930s in self-imposed exile on the Shetland Islands. On the Renaissance and the rise of modernism in Scotland, see McCulloch (2009).

¹⁸ Shelley (1840) 57, as quoted in Young (1962) 113.

¹⁹ Young (1962) 113. The term "Scottish Renaissance" was first coined in French by the Toulousian critic, Denis Saurat (1890–1958) in "Le groupe de la Renaissance ecossaise." See Saurat (1924).

literary language drawn from all the dialects.”²⁰ As MacDiarmid envisioned it, the remaking of Scots into a more stylistically pliant vernacular was not a ploy to animate further provincialism in Scotland.²¹ On the contrary, Scottish literature had already had enough of “Doric infantilism” with its “instinctive suspicion of cleverness and culture.”²² What the country needed was not “mental inertia” but a standard literary vernacular that embraced “all progressive and creative tendencies” in modern literature.²³ Such a language would push Scots poets from “anti-cultural prejudices” and

...[the] mental and spiritual agoraphobia which has driven them—and to all intents and purposes the rest of Scotland with them!—into a cul de sac, where they bury their minds (as ostriches bury their heads) in the shadow of the blind wall which blocks them out from literature and from life.²⁴

MacDiarmid derived his experimental vision for Scots in large part from Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922), but it was also the *Landsmål* movement—perhaps Arne Garborg’s *Odysseuskvædet*, a Nynorsk verse translation of *The Odyssey* (1918)—which first exposed him to a synthetic language of national scope.²⁵ Over the next four years, MacDiarmid worked at developing his synthetic language in three collections of poetry: *Sangschaw* (1925), *Penny Wheep* (1926), and finally, a long poem entitled, *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* (1926). On reading the last of these, Douglas Young was moved greatly, hearing in point and counterpoint,

20 Grieve [under the pseudonym of J.G. Outterstone Buglass] (1924) 237. Following the publication of Allan Ramsay’s play, *The Gentle Shepherd* (1725), the epithet “Doric” was used to describe the rough speech of Northumbria and the Scottish Lowlands. The term was appropriated by the critic, Alexander Tytler, Lord Woodhouselee (1747–1813), who, in his “Essay on Ramsay’s Gentle Shepherd,” stressed the “Doric simplicity” of Scots when compared with the urbane English of London. See Woodhouselee (1852) lviii. Later, in an unsigned review of N.F. Moore’s 1835 *Lectures on the Greek Language and Literature*, an anonymous critic also noted the likeness of “Grecian Doric” and Scots vernacular: “In English, the dialect of Allan Ramsay’s Gentle Shepherd, and of many of the sweetest songs of Burns, corresponds in no slight degree with the Grecian Doric” (Anon. (1836) 107). On the development of the Doric, see McClure (2000a) and (2002).

21 On MacDiarmid’s turn to synthetic Scots, see Bold (1990a) 121–30.

22 Grieve (1922) 756, 754.

23 Grieve (1922) 754, 755.

24 Grieve (1922) 756.

25 Outterstone Buglass (1924); and Bold (1990a) 125.

the authentic voice o Scotland,
la voix du sang, de mon sang,
 and nae the muffin-mouit mummle o Saxonie and Jutland
 that had threepit at me sae lang.²⁶

Composed in 2,685 lines, *A Drunk Man* was what MacDiarmid called a "gallimaufry," a satirical *patois* steeped with polyglot intrusions from other European languages.²⁷ The linguistic heterogeneity was set out to "pit in a concrete abstraction" what G. Gregory Smith (1865–1932) had defined as the "Caledonian antiszygy," the "zigzag of contradictions" and "sudden jostling of contraries" at work in the psyche of the modern Scot.²⁸ That "polemical restlessness" articulated formally in the poem's fusion of language inspired Douglas Young, and years later he paid homage, recounting his discovery of MacDiarmid in a letter written in his own synthetic verse.²⁹

Och weel, I'll tell ye. It was juist τοῦμόν ὄνειαρ ἐμοί,
 my ain dream to me, when ae day for a ploy
 I began to *feuilleter*, *durchblättern*, your buiks in a shoppie,—
 the *Drunk Man* it was,—and I coft a copy,
 and was kind o dumbfoundert a wee as gin I'd been drinkan
 to see in prent a chiel thinkan as I'd been thinkan.³⁰

Like MacDiarmid, Young possessed from a young age "a sort of nationalist instinct" in both political and literary matters.³¹ Frustrated by his attempts to write English poetry, Young developed a "tendency to polyglot versification" in his earliest work, a tendency he attributed to his study of classics and the "student occupation of Latin and Greek verse-turning."³² However, it was not until he read *A Drunk Man* that Young found his community: the "national subconscious that my Psyche is part o spak / psychosympathetically throu your prentit splairgean."³³ The poem showed him a way forward for his own writing, confirming his belief that greater invention and experiment was needed

26 Young (1945) 27.

27 M'Diarmid (1926) vii.

28 MacDiarmid (1926) 145; and Smith (1919) 4, 20.

29 Smith (1919) 4.

30 Young (1945) 27.

31 Young (1950) 55.

32 Young (1945) 28.

33 Young (1945) 27.

in modern Scottish literature: “and down intil unplumbed deeps” MacDiarmid thrust him; “my Thumos plungeit back / like a bucket intil a well, syne again emergean / brimfou o a life unkent afore.”³⁴

Young’s admiration notwithstanding, many in Scotland remained unconvinced by MacDiarmid’s achievement. Foremost among the critics was the Orcadian poet and translator, Edwin Muir (1887–1959). Initially an enthusiast and a perceptive critic of MacDiarmid’s work, Muir came to see his experiments with synthetic Scots as “an isolated phenomenon.”³⁵ MacDiarmid was “a poet of great originality,” but his Scots was too idiosyncratic and artificial, the forced synthesis revealing not a common spoken vernacular but Scotland’s “lack of a whole language, which finally means the lack of a whole mind.”³⁶ Despite MacDiarmid’s efforts to impregnate Scots with European influence and galvanize it through “a series of violent shocks,” the country had not seen the renewal he envisioned: “the landscape is not noticeably diversified,” Muir explained, “with poets chanting in synthetic Scots; while on the other hand the village bards who have excruciated us for so long still calmly proceed on their traditional way.”³⁷ For Muir there was no “half-way house” for Scottish writers: a national literature could be established, but not in synthetic Scots. Only Scottish Gaelic or English, he thought, would do: “And of these two alternatives English is the only practicable one at present.”³⁸

MacDiarmid abhorred the “absurd pro-English prejudice” Muir espoused.³⁹ Denouncing him a traitor, MacDiarmid urged his contemporaries to “search for a new classicism today” in synthetic Scots, a tongue which was ready to emerge as the “manifestation among us in Scotland of a worldwide tendency.”⁴⁰ However, to develop this new classicism, MacDiarmid insisted that Scots poets reject all previous neoclassical models presented by the European Renaissance. Those reformulations of antiquity had to be eschewed because the classical at its origin in ancient Greece had not come, he thought, through secondhand imitation. Citing Daniel Corkery’s 1925 study, *The Hidden Ireland*, MacDiarmid noted that nothing authentically classical had ever been created in aping the genius of another nation: “Renaissance standards are not Greek standards. Greek standards in their own time and place were standards arrived

34 Young (1945) 27.

35 Muir, reprinted in McCulloch (2005) 70.

36 Muir (1934) 148; and Muir (1936) 22.

37 Muir (1936) 21–2; and Muir, reprinted in McCulloch (2005) 70.

38 Muir (1936) 178.

39 Grieve, reprinted in McCulloch (2005) 61.

40 MacDiarmid (1931) 80; and McCulloch (2005) 64. See also Grieve (1927) 60–3.

at by the Greek nation; they were national standards.'"⁴¹ Scots poets were to emulate, not imitate the Greeks; they were to dig deep down to "*Ur-motives*—to get back behind the Renaissance" so that they might realize "their national genius in the way Greece and Rome themselves did."⁴² In doing so, the country's "fundamental form" would be adumbrated in a literature which expressed Scotland's "alternative value of prime consequence when set against the Greek and Roman literatures which are all that most of us mean when we speak of 'the Classics.'"⁴³

The stress which MacDiarmid placed on a "new classicism" attracted the admiration of Young, who, by the late 1930s, was beginning to make his name as a nationalist agitator. In 1939 he wrote to MacDiarmid professing profound appreciation of his work. But Young was also worried: MacDiarmid's editorial presence in *The Voice of Scotland*—a nationalist journal which he launched while living in isolation on Whalsay Island—had, of late, seemed too vituperative, too doctrinaire to garner much popular support with common Scottish men and women.⁴⁴ "Your party repudiates equally the Scottish National Party and the Home Rule movement within the British Labour Party. That, I beg to suggest, is excellent doctrine but poor propaganda. We need a *Scottish Popular Front*."⁴⁵ If the Scottish Renaissance were to thrive, Young thought, *The Voice* had to adopt a less strident tone, working "from a propaganda point of view rather than a doctrinal" one, seeking clear "points of agreement with other nationalists and socialists rather than disagreement."⁴⁶ This approach would help build, he claimed, a broad base of support for the nationalist movement, *The Voice* then penetrating "all classes that are permeable" in Scotland.⁴⁷ Above all, nationalists had to do better: they had to direct their savagery, not at one another, but at their "*one real and immediate enemy*, the London boss-class."⁴⁸ MacDiarmid welcomed Young's criticism and published the letter anonymously in the next issue of *The Voice*. But still he refused to renounce the caustic persona he had taken up as editor. The belligerence was deliberate, he insisted, and what Young now desired—conciliation with more "established political parties" in Britain—was impossible, for all major parties held

41 Corkery (1925) xiv, quoted in MacDiarmid (1931) 79.

42 MacDiarmid (1931) 80; and MacDiarmid (1953) 173.

43 Grieve (1927) 60; and MacDiarmid (1931) 63.

44 Young (1939) 17–8.

45 Young (1939) 17.

46 Young (1939) 18.

47 Young (1939) 17.

48 Young (1939) 18.

what MacDiarmid deemed “entirely erroneous ideas with regard to Scotland.”⁴⁹ His work as editor was to arrest and “correct these through the medium of a periodical with a highly specialised appeal to the ablest minds responsible for the programmes and propaganda of these parties.”⁵⁰ The journal was to influence opinion among the social, political and artistic elite, not assemble the *Scottish Popular Front* which Young hoped to rally.⁵¹ The “continuity of culture” in Scotland would be maintained, MacDiarmid wrote citing Eliot’s “Last Words” from *The Criterion*, not by popular acclamation but “by a very small number of people indeed.”⁵² Collective movements with great popular appeal had too often produced only “results of appalling barbarity.”⁵³ *The Voice* would have no part of that, he argued. It would instead remain a place where “fundamental issues can be threshed out without regard to any compromises generally accepted for immediate ‘practical’ purposes.”⁵⁴

Despite their disagreement, MacDiarmid wrote to Young to express sympathy. The two men had too much in common to stand apart. Both agreed that “theoretic inadequacy and anti-intellectualism” was the “great weakness” of Scotland, eating away at its political life among the “Radical, Liberal, Social Democratic, and now Communist elements” in the country.⁵⁵ The struggle at present lay in what MacDiarmid called the “language issue, the goal of re-Gaelicisation and the means thereto, the necessity of a ‘learnéd poetry.’”⁵⁶ It was time to encourage “the fullest internationalism” in the “intellectual affiliations” of Scots writing, to make the synthetic vernacular more “multi-linguistic,” more cosmopolitan and conversant with rival literary traditions in

49 MacDiarmid (1939) 19.

50 MacDiarmid (1939) 19.

51 MacDiarmid’s sentiment reflects the “thorough contempt for the mob,” the disavowal of the “hydra-headed detestable vulgus” of which Ezra Pound wrote years earlier in *The Little Review*: “The shell-fish grows its own shell, the genius creates its own milieu. You, the public, can kill genius by actual physical starvation, you may perhaps thwart or distort it, but you can in no way create it” (Pound (1917) 6).

52 MacDiarmid (1939) 19; Eliot (1939). For a similar reason, MacDiarmid refused to divide *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* into sections that provided “those ‘hand-rails’ which raise false hopes in the ingenuous minds of readers whose rational intelligences are all too insusceptible of realising the enormities of which ‘highbrows’ of my type are capable—even in Scotland” (MacDiarmid (1926) viii).

53 MacDiarmid (1939) 20.

54 MacDiarmid (1939) 19.

55 Grieve, Letter to Douglas Young, 20 January 1939 (NLS).

56 Grieve, Letter to Young, 10 July 1940 (NLS).

Britain and abroad.⁵⁷ With MacDiarmid's support Young himself cultivated this tendency in his own poetry, finishing—while incarcerated in 1943 for refusing conscription—revisions to *Auntran Blads: An Outwale o Verses*, his first collection of Scots poetry and translation.⁵⁸ Accompanied with a foreword by MacDiarmid, the book was released as Young emerged from prison. In the foreword MacDiarmid saluted Young's talent, praising the "many-sided fruitful relation" of language and politics he had set into verse.⁵⁹ The volume contained poetry in Lallans, Greek, German, Latin and French; Young also translated both in and out of synthetic Scots, adapting among others: Homer, Sappho, Theognis, Catullus, as well as Dante, Burns, Hoffmannstahl, Valéry, Pushkin, and his Gaelic-speaking contemporaries, Sorley MacLean and George Campbell Hay. For MacDiarmid, the range and quality of *Auntran Blads* showed not just erudition but Young's potential for further "literary and political leadership" in Scotland.⁶⁰ His work possessed strength by fusing a

passionate concern with Scottish social and economic problems—this regained knowledge of the differentiae of Scottish literature, in all its phases, Gaelic, Scots, Latin and of the whole history of our country—this knowledge and loving use of our neglected Scottish languages—this vivid sense of our very different historical, psychological and practical affiliations from those of the English people with the other peoples of Europe.⁶¹

By penetrating his verse with "healthy intromissions" drawn from other European literatures, Young sought to dislocate Scots from the English tradition, realigning it through a nexus of international links to European modernity and the classical past.⁶² For MacDiarmid the sheer diversity of these connections reflected the "keen concern" of many new writers of Scots, their engagement with what he called "the whole range of *welt-literatur*" and a "many-sided knowledge of it."⁶³

Though MacDiarmid thought *Auntran Blads* a success, his collaboration with Douglas Young did not last. Young published a second volume of polyglot

⁵⁷ Grieve, Letter to Young, 10 July 1940 (NLS).

⁵⁸ Young (1943); see Grieve, Letter to Young, 17 January 1943 (NLS).

⁵⁹ MacDiarmid (1943) 7. On Young as a translator of Scots, see McClure (1987) and (2004).

⁶⁰ MacDiarmid (1943) 6.

⁶¹ MacDiarmid (1943) 7.

⁶² MacDiarmid (1994) 354.

⁶³ MacDiarmid (1994) 354.

poems and translations, *A Braird o Thristles*, in 1947, but he was gradually becoming “a poor poet” in MacDiarmid’s estimation; his writing had grown, he thought, less experimental and thus less worthy of national interest.⁶⁴ “I have no great opinion,” MacDiarmid later told his son, “of his critical ability so far as poetry is concerned.”⁶⁵ Consequently, when in 1954 MacDiarmid wrote a retrospective essay on British poetry, he did so with little thought of the promise he once attached to Douglas Young. MacDiarmid was not out, however, to lament unsatisfied hope. Instead, he used the essay for another end: to deride the “tragical disappointment” of England’s so-called “Literary Left.”⁶⁶ In MacDiarmid’s view, the work of W.H. Auden (1907–73), Louis MacNeice (1907–63), and Cecil Day-Lewis (1904–72) had been a sham; their affectation was analogous to the snobbery and self-preening of Theognis. “There was I,” he wrote adapting lines from the prologue of Aristophanes’ *Acharnians* (lines 9–22),

Gaping to hear old Aeschylus when the Herald
 Called out, “Theognis, bring your chorus forward.”
 Imagine what my feelings must have been!
 . . . never in my lifetime, boy or man,
 Was I so vexed as at this present moment;
 To see the Pnyx, at this time of morning,
 Quite empty, when the Assembly should be full,
 And know the explanation I must pass
 (A verdict with a consoling adjective withal)
 On all these English ‘people’s poets’ is but this:
 —You cannot light a match on a crumbling wall.⁶⁷

In imitating Aristophanes MacDiarmid attacked “MacSpaunday,” and showed his superior wit, the Scotsman’s capacity for “descriptive and satirical genius” passed down from Robert Burns on.⁶⁸ That kind of genius was especially lack-

64 MacDiarmid (1951) 280.

65 MacDiarmid (1951) 280. Young still held MacDiarmid in high esteem. In the winter of 1949 he began a successful campaign to secure for MacDiarmid a Civil List Pension from the Prime Minister’s office. See Young, Letter to Valda Grieve, 25 February 1949 (NLS).

66 MacDiarmid (1954) 316.

67 MacDiarmid (1954) 316.

68 Chambers (1854) 168. The “Brave MacSpaunday,” a composite name for Auden, MacNeice, Day-Lewis, and Stephen Spender (1909–95), was coined by the poet, Roy Campbell (1901–57) in his collection, *Talking Bronco*. See Campbell (1946) 78, 81, 82.

ing in English, and its absence limited expressive possibilities in English literature itself. Recently, he noted, even the *TLS* critic A.P. Ryan had suggested this in an essay on Aristophanes and contemporary translation.⁶⁹ According to Ryan, Aristophanes still remained "a closed book" in modern English, his Greek having no effective parallel or linguistic equivalent in the Anglophone world.⁷⁰ Aristophanes' absence was all the more notable, Ryan asserted, because in recent years a renewed "vitality of interest" in English versions of Greek drama had emerged in Britain.⁷¹ Formal "Greek learning" was in decline, but Attic tragedy was experiencing an "undeniable and unexpected" popular resurgence, a "new lease of life" granted by the marketability of cheap paperback translations.⁷² "Who, 10 years ago," Ryan asked, "would have been sure that cheap, paper-covered editions of translations, prepared for the common man, would sell by tens of thousands? But they have done so."⁷³ Admittedly, the sense of the Greek original had often suffered "much distortion in the process of being assimilated into the fashionable thought of the 1950s," but to Ryan that seemed to matter little: accessibility and exposure of the classics were greater values than accuracy or literary innovation.⁷⁴

Preparing an English Aristophanes for the "common man," however, was a more difficult matter. The Greek poet remained only "a dim figure" in modern literature, one entrenched "in that limbo of classics to whom polite, unenthusiastic attention is paid from time to time, but who have lost vitality."⁷⁵ Ryan attributed this tepid reception to the "phallic ebullience" of Aristophanes unfiltered in the original Greek.⁷⁶ His comedies were at once "distinct from modern pornography" but still so obscene that they remained "impossible to reproduce in terms of present-day culture."

The boldest defender of the right of artists to be frank must, if he be honest, gasp at the thought of *The Lysistrata* as it was originally produced. There are in that play and in other plays, stage effects—quite apart from the language—which would have been unthinkable in the most licentious of Cider Cellar orgies . . . A pagan culture could—and did—deal with sex

69 MacDiarmid (1954) 320.

70 Ryan (1953).

71 Ryan (1953).

72 Ryan (1953).

73 Ryan (1953).

74 Ryan (1953).

75 Ryan (1953).

76 Ryan (1953).

in a way repugnant nowadays even to unbelievers who, happily, cannot escape from their Christian background.⁷⁷

Too bald-faced and uninhibited for the contemporary world, Aristophanes' "no holds barred" vision had no equivalent in British theatre, where the "fear of libel" ran deep, and poets were often too sheepish to risk alienation "by attacking the living and the dead."⁷⁸ Thus, when attempts were made to anglicize Aristophanes, his Greek indecency forced translators into what Ryan called a "linguistic strip-tease, leaving the Greek verses unexpurgated, the notes taking refuge in Latin prose, and the English speechless."⁷⁹ In this striptease, however, in this speechlessness of English, Hugh MacDiarmid sensed an opportunity for writers of Scots—a chance to give voice to an ancient deemed untranslatable and offensive to British taste. Ryan's essay charted the "limitations of the English language," and in so doing, it provided proof for what MacDiarmid called the "gulf between the life of action and that of the imagination" at work in English.⁸⁰ To become an effective agent again, English now needed a "desuetization," an excision of "cold fat" from the tongue.⁸¹ But Scots had no such gulf in it, and the language needed no repair. Unlike English it remained a "realistic" language, grounded in "practical reason" and free from the "dope addicts of 'the poetic.'"⁸² Because of this, Lallans still possessed a capacity for strong satire and caustic political critique. It was, MacDiarmid declared, "splendidly rich in what English cannot encompass," and thus capable of delivering what some thought impossible: a modern Aristophanes "'at once more highbrow and more coarse than anything'" seen on the British stage.⁸³

Yet with no formal education in classics and only a fitful knowledge of ancient Greek, MacDiarmid himself made no attempt on "an intelligent borrowing from the Aristophanic model" in synthetic Scots.⁸⁴ Nor did he, despite their previous collaboration, urge Douglas Young to take on the task. Young, however, already had it in mind to produce Attic drama in a Scottish theatre. As Bill Findlay has noted, modern Scots translation of foreign drama began

77 Ryan (1953).

78 Ryan (1953).

79 Ryan (1953).

80 MacDiarmid (1954) 320, 319.

81 MacDiarmid (1954) 319; and Pound (1970) 253.

82 MacDiarmid (1954) 319.

83 MacDiarmid (1954) 320.

84 Ryan (1953).

in earnest in the 1940s with Robert Kemp's versions of Molière.⁸⁵ Young knew Kemp personally and admired his work, but the more immediate influence on him was the Glaswegian playwright, Osborne Henry Mavor (1888–1951), known by his pseudonym, James Bridie. During the winter of 1950–1951, Bridie started a Scots version of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. Aware perhaps that Young himself had recently been working on "a Lallans version of a chorus from the *Agamemnon*," Bridie sent him "the first 100 lines or so" of his *Oedipus*, hoping the scholar would work with him on a Scots Sophocles.⁸⁶ Young agreed, but as he later recalled, he could only annotate and return Bridie's draft at the time; his academic commitments made it impossible to do more until Easter 1951.⁸⁷ James Bridie suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and died on the 29th of January. With his death, progress on Scotland's *Oedipus* halted. Young vowed to finish the work, but he soon found it difficult to sustain a tragic pitch in Lallans while creating "an effective speaking text" for production.⁸⁸ Translating Sophocles and tragedy more broadly was "more difficult," he admitted, "because it is more artificial in the original and because Scots in extant use for generations has been almost wholly informal and comic, so that words with comic overtones are likely to be unintelligible."⁸⁹ Despite his failure to finish *Oedipus*, Bridie remained an inspiration to Young, and he later traced his versions of Aristophanes to his "never to be enough lamented" life and work.⁹⁰

After Bridie's death Young put aside his pursuit of Attic drama until the summer of 1957. At that time he was approached by "an intelligent loon," George Stirling Maxwell, a student in classics at St Andrews.⁹¹ Maxwell was eager to stage a Scots version of *Frogs* with his undergraduate troupe, the Reid Gouns, at the nearby Byre Theatre in February 1958. Young agreed to the translation,

85 Findlay (2005) 176; and see Corbett (1999).

86 In June 1950 Young sent his Scots *Agamemnon* chorus to Hugh MacDiarmid along with Lallans versions of Goethe's "Kennst du das Land," two short pieces from Sulpicia and Propertius, and the finale from Sorley MacLean's "The Cuillin." MacDiarmid intended to publish one of these translations in the fifth miscellany of *Scottish Arts and Letters*. He chose Young's version of MacLean. See MacLean (1950). To my knowledge, Young's Scots chorus from *Agamemnon* has never been published. Posthumously his English verse translation of the *Oresteia* "from a scientifically conservative Greek text" appeared with the University of Oklahoma Press (1974) (Young, Letter to Christopher Grieve, 17 June 1950 (NLS)). See also Young, Letter to T.S. Eliot, 12 April 1958 (NLS).

87 Noted in Bannister (1955) 241.

88 Young, Letter to Archibald Campbell, 19 October 1958 (NLS).

89 Young, Letter to Campbell, 19 October 1958 (NLS).

90 Douglas Young, Letter to the Editor of *The Scotsman*, 3 September 1966 (NLS).

91 Young, Letter to A.F. Giles, 6 August 1957 (NLS).

and after working furiously for little over a month, he completed a draft “in verse of sorts” in July 1957.⁹² The manuscript, which he entitled *The Puddocks*, initially contained 1,533 lines “of not too inspissated Lallans,” a language Young was surprised to find far more “adequate” at conjuring the essence of Greek comedy than it had been with Sophoclean tragedy.⁹³ Lallans, he thought, was sufficiently classical; it offered an effective parallel to the original through which one could mash what Young called the “Attic salt” of Aristophanes into braid Scots.⁹⁴ Young’s friend, the Wadham College classicist, Maurice Bowra, agreed:

I have enjoyed [your translation] enormously (though not without difficulty at times, in my ignorance), and it is the most brilliant and amusing achievement. The Lallans is so delightfully classical a language (I had not known this before) that it catches the neatness and sharpness of the Greek as our new Chicago or Minneapolis versions completely fail to do. I am so glad also that you have allowed metre to have its way. It is really needed, and without it, or with only adumbrations of it, one wonders where one is.⁹⁵

Over the final months of 1957, Young continued to revise his translation, consulting a wide network of scholars and friends throughout Scotland. For corrections to the Scots, he called on David Murison (1913–97), lexicographer and editor of the *Scottish National Dictionary*. To set the choral passages, he conferred with James Porter and E. Kerr Borthwick (1925–2008), then an emerging authority on the role of music in Greek literature and culture. Finally, as to the text and interpretation of the Greek itself, Young sought the advice of many classicists, most notably William Laughton Lorimer (1885–1967), Kenneth Dover (1920–2010), and later, Nan Dunbar (1928–2005). Dover, recently appointed professor of Greek at St Andrews, thought *The Puddocks* made “good reading” but even he confessed: “I won’t pretend I know what it means all the time!”⁹⁶ Young appreciated the praise, but Dover’s failure to fully grasp *The Puddocks* exposed a problem at the heart of the translation. When staged or broadcast for any Anglophone audience, the play might seem

92 Young, Letter to G.S. Maxwell, 21 July 1957 (NLS).

93 Young, Letter to Cedric Thorpe Davie, 21 July 1957 (NLS); and Young, Letter to Maxwell, 21 July 1957 (NLS).

94 Young (1958) v.

95 Bowra, Letter to Young, 22 January 1958 (NLS).

96 Dover, Letter to Young, 21 September 1957 (NLS).

"too recondite and the language too difficult."⁹⁷ To remedy this, to make his Aristophanes more amenable for production and popular taste, Young capitulated, to a degree, on the use of Scots. He began developing what he called "a sort of variorum version" of *The Puddocks*, one that allowed for dilution of the Doric, offering "more readily intelligible" alternate phrases in Scots, British, Irish, and American English.⁹⁸ "I am quite ready," he told Robin Richardson of BBC Scotland, "to cut any obscenity or obscurity for production, or water down the Lallans."⁹⁹ As Young saw it, greater pliancy might smooth out obscurities in the target language and "reduce or emasculate" the especially "hair-raising" obscenities of Aristophanes' original.¹⁰⁰ His Scots might then, he believed, gain greater popular favor, having been made more compliant through "various degrees of bowdlerisation for different audiences, and various degrees of Scotticism too."¹⁰¹

But for some Young's pursuit of the "*mot facile* rather than the *mot juste*" did not go far enough.¹⁰² Before the play's first performance, he submitted the script for licence to the Lord Chamberlain, at that time Lawrence Roger Lumley (1896–1969), 11th Earl of Scarbrough. Young thought the matter a formality, but *The Puddocks* would not be staged without first being blotted by the blue pencil. Lumley demanded that verses 479, 482–91, and 545–6 be altered or struck from the comedy entirely.¹⁰³ Astounded, Young wrote many friends eager to learn what constitutional position the Lord Chamberlain occupied with regard to Scots plays, specifically "whether his powers have ever been challenged in Scottish Courts."¹⁰⁴ Young was willing to let directors and producers adapt, bowdlerize, and even dilute his Scots, but on principle he detested the official interference of English authority in Scottish matters. And this specific intrusion, he believed, might be disputed in court:

the present chamberlain, Scarborough, knows no Scots. However, in point of law, is the man responsible to parl.t.? If so, I might get an M.P. to ask

97 Robin Richardson, Letter to Young, 16 October 1957 (NLS); and see Young, Letter to Kenneth Dover, 23 September 1957 (NLS).

98 Young, Letter to Maxwell, 21 July 1957 (NLS); and Young, Letter to Richardson, 7 August 1957 (NLS).

99 Young, Letter to Richardson, 14 September 1957 (NLS).

100 Young, Letter to Richardson, 7 August 1957 (NLS); and Young, Letter to Maxwell, 21 July 1957 (NLS).

101 Young, Letter to Giles, 6 August 1957 (NLS).

102 Young, Letter to Campbell, 7 October 1958 (NLS).

103 Assistant Comptroller, Lord Chamberlain's Office, Letter to Young, 23 January 1958 (NLS).

104 Young, Letter to Jack Mackenzie, 23 February 1958 (NLS).

some Minister what qualifications he has to censor plays in Scots. If he is responsible only to the Sovereign, what then? Ought we to petition the sov. to appoint a Lallophone chamberlain or [*sic*] censor for Scotland? There may be some fun to be had.¹⁰⁵

Just as W.B. Yeats (1865–1939) once hoped to contest English censorship by staging an Irish *Oedipus Rex* in Dublin, Young believed *The Puddocks* could be used to foment nationalist fervor against the Lord Chamberlain in Scotland.¹⁰⁶ However, by 1958 Douglas Young had become more moderate, and was more willing to comply with British authority than he had been during the conscription crisis of the 1940s. “I shall have to consider carefully,” he wrote to a friend, “what, if anything, to do about the Ld Ch. in relation to this play, or Scots efforts in general. We don’t want to cause trouble for A.B. Paterson and his little Byre venture.”¹⁰⁷ Wary of plunging the Byre Theatre into a legal morass, Young demurred and followed instead the advice of Thomas Broun Smith, professor of Scots Law at Aberdeen. Smith warned him: section 14 of the 1843 Theatres Act drew the Lord Chamberlain’s power so widely that a “challenge in law would be most difficult.”¹⁰⁸ Young therefore put the matter aside, and agreed to the censor’s demands, omitting in performance all lines marked.¹⁰⁹ Privately, though, he still spoke of tackling the issue afresh, challenging the

105 Young, Letter to Thomas Broun Smith, 3 February 1958 (NLS).

106 From the mid-eighteenth century until Max Reinhardt’s production of January 1912, public performance of *Oedipus Rex* was forbidden in Britain. The tragedy’s frank exploration of incest and parricide might, it was thought, “gratify unclean and morbid sentiment,” appealing to what one advisor to the English censor called in 1910 “a vitiated public taste solely in the cause of indecency.” Its prohibition in mind, Yeats hoped Irish poets could use the play to attack the “puritanism” of contemporary English theatre. From as early as 1904, he thought to translate and stage *Oedipus Rex* in Dublin. Such a production would show, he believed, the “intellectual excitement” of the Irish theatre, its unique position as “a place where the mind goes to be liberated as it was liberated by the theatres of Greece” (Yeats (1904); and Yeats (1903)). On Yeats’ struggle to have *Oedipus* translated and produced, see Clark and McGuire (1989), as well as Macintosh (2008). On the prohibition of the *Oedipus Rex* in Britain, see Stanley Buckmaster, Letter to the Lord Chamberlain, Charles Spencer, 23 November 1910; John Hare, Letter to the Lord Chamberlain, Charles Spencer, 21 November 1910 (Lord Chamberlain’s Plays Correspondence File: *Oedipus Rex* 1910/814 (BL)); and Macintosh (1997).

107 Young, Letter to Smith, 12 February 1958 (NLS).

108 Smith, Letter to Young, 9 February 1958 (NLS).

109 Young, Letter to the Assistant Comptroller, Lord Chamberlain’s Office, 9 February 1958 (NLS).

Lord Chamberlain "if only for the publicity value" whenever *The Puddocks* was first produced professionally.¹¹⁰

That moment, however, never came. *The Puddocks* premiered successfully from the 24th–28th February 1958. The comedy was then set for a more public unveiling in Edinburgh's Braidburn Theatre at the Festival Fringe later that summer (29th August–12th September 1958). And yet, though given this opportunity, Young did not then formally contest English censorship. He did complain once again, as C.W. Marshall notes, about the Lord Chamberlain's powers in the foreword to the second edition of *The Puddocks* (published in time for the Festival).¹¹¹ But even then Young simply encouraged his contemporaries to take up the fight against censorship if they thought it "worth while" to make "a constitutional stand about it."¹¹² He himself would not. He was eager that *The Puddocks* be regarded "not merely as a linguistic curiosity but as a comedy," and for that reason, he was willing to lessen its difficulty for greater popular acceptance in Scotland.¹¹³ If public favor could be guaranteed by the substitution of "whatever English, American, Irish, or other expressions" considered appropriate for specific productions, then Young was glad to make that trade.¹¹⁴ A protracted legal battle with the censor over only a few lines seemed unreasonable. Though an "almost pathological conservative in matters of ancient texts," Young believed that some dilution would not harm his version: the voice of Aristophanes—his "Greek usages, localisms, slang, preciosities" and "archaisms"—would be preserved in the varied diction of his "high-style" Scots.¹¹⁵ The Greek οἰδοῦσαν ὑπὸ κομπασμάτων καὶ ῥημάτων ἐπαχθῶν (*Frogs* 940) would still emerge "swown wi guffie vousts and muckle creeshy phrases" as in the dispute of Aeschylus and Euripides (*Frogs* 936–44).¹¹⁶

Aes: Ye God-forsaken stunkard, you, what kind o things did you stage?
Eur: Nae horse-cocks, Fegs, nor hybrid brutes like your goatdeers,
 sic ferlies
 as ane micht see on tapestries or unco Persion carpets.
 But eftir I took owre frae you the tragic craft, tae stert wi,

110 Young, Letter to Smith, 12 February 1958 (NLS).

111 Young (1958); see also Marshall (2010–11) 540.

112 Young (1958) x.

113 Young (1958) ix.

114 Young (1958) ix.

115 Young, Letter to Peter Green, 18 September 1959 (NLS); and Young (1958) v. On Young's "high-style," see Corbett (1999) 136–7, 155–6, 158–60; and McClure (2004).

116 Young (1958) v, 31.

I fand her swown wi guffie vousts and muckle creeshy phrases;
 sae first of aa I slimmed her down and took the creesh wecht aff
 her,
 wi lyrics and digressions and a shuggar-beetruit diet;
 I gae a dose o havers syne, frae muckle volumes filtered;
 I mashled in Kephispohon and toned her up wi solos.
 I didna blether clean affluif, or breenge on mixer-maxter;
 my character that cam on first explained the plot's hale
 backgrund, its origin.

Di: Fegs, better that nor tell us your hale backgrund.¹¹⁷

To put this idiom of “mixter-maxter” on stage, one had to accommodate common ignorance of Lallans, an ignorance Young found in “not only English, Irish, Welsh, and American friends,” but also among those “semi-literate North Britons,” “quislings” whose disregard for Scottish culture he once believed to be a prime cause of the country’s deracination.¹¹⁸ Quislings, he wrote in 1945, had made the Scottish

a race of gangrels, scattered through all lands, like the Gypsies, or the Jews, or the Armenians. Internationally-minded though I am, I do not see how the world would gain if our Scottish Nation dwindled and died out from our historic homeland. If the salt hath lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?¹¹⁹

By 1958, however, Young’s rhetoric had become less extreme, and he was prepared to let his Scots lose some savor, if it meant preserving bits of the vernacular which stood a better chance of survival. He hoped to gain a wider audience, to rally a *Popular Front* in much the way he believed *The Voice of Scotland* should have in 1939. For this reason, Young compromised ideological purity and stepped back from the polyglot classicism he espoused in the early 1940s. Cosmopolitan though he was by taste, he knew the polemical modernism of Hugh MacDiarmid was now in retreat. His translations therefore, both *The Puddocks* and a second, *The Burdies* of 1959, emerged in a moment of diminished ambition, rising from an attenuated sense of what classics

¹¹⁷ Young (1958) 31.

¹¹⁸ Young (1958) x; and Young (1942a) 32.

¹¹⁹ Young (1946) 6.

could do for the political and linguistic invention of Scottish independence.¹²⁰ Aristophanes did find new life, but his appearance also marked, in part, an end to the marriage of classics and modernist experiment, a marriage which helped fire the achievements and linguistic synthesis of the Scots literary renaissance.

In spite of this, both *The Puddocks* and *The Burdies* were well received by MacDiarmid. Throughout the 1950s he and Young had grown distant, coming together at times to bicker over the direction of modern Scottish literature. MacDiarmid believed Young had become, bit by bit, a reactionary who despised "modernistic trends in poetry" only "to uphold superannuated kinds of verse."¹²¹ That preference drove his verse into what MacDiarmid called "wit-writing rather than poetry."¹²² However, on reading an inscribed copy of *The Puddocks* which Young sent him in early 1958, MacDiarmid found much to admire.

I have just read it through once so far—but with much enjoyment of the many excellent turns of phrase, and of the wit of the variants and notes at the end. I hope there is a chance of its being put on somewhere. I'll read it again—and probably again and again—and if I don't express more detailed appreciation now, that is because I'll hope to write about it in the "Voice of Scotland."¹²³

120 After completing *The Burdies* Young contemplated a Scots version of *Clouds*—*The Clouds*—a comedy he thought "the most contemporary of the Aristophanes things." However, *The Burdies*, when staged by the Reid Gouns at the 1959 Festival Fringe, "completely flopped," and that failure put a damper on further interest in his translation. Young still hoped that Tyrone Guthrie and the cast of his *Ane Pleasant Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* production (1948) might be persuaded to stage either *The Burdies* or a version of *Clouds*. Young sent Guthrie a copy of *The Burdies*, and though he was happy to receive it, Guthrie did not take up the task of producing any of Young's translations (Young, Letter to T.J. Honeyman, 26 December 1959 (NLS); Young and Murison (n.d.) 22; Tyrone Guthrie, Letter to Young, 7 September 1959 (NLS). *The Burdies* was later revived in 1966 by the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company for the Edinburgh International Festival. On the controversy surrounding this production, see Marshall (2010–11) 542–3; Robb (2007) 113–6; and Young (1966a).

121 MacDiarmid (1959) 801.

122 Quoted in Kitchin (1955) 266. Despite such remarks, MacDiarmid nonetheless lamented Young's absence in the public eye during the 1950s: "Anyhow we never run across each other nowadays—which I regret. Your occasional letters in the *Scotsman*, and your appearances in 'Matter of Opinion', are about the only evidences of your continued existence I encounter" (Grieve, Letter to Young, 19 January 1956 (NLS)).

123 Grieve, Letter to Young, 13 January 1958 (NLS).

MacDiarmid made no suggestions for further revision to the text, but at Young's behest he traveled to Glasgow to observe a rehearsal of *The Puddocks* just a week before its premiere in February.¹²⁴ Later when reviewing it for *The Voice*, MacDiarmid praised the play's "wit and scholarship," as well as its "notable success" with the public.¹²⁵ "Mr. Young's faith was abundantly justified," he declared,

and there is cause for much justification that, after lying fallow since the publication several years ago of his volumes of Lallans poems, his creative impulse should have propelled him vigorously in this most promising new direction. We will hope for further similar ventures.¹²⁶

Enthusiasm aside, MacDiarmid knew that despite Young's effort, the current generation of "Makars" had "not recently thrown up much new verse of any value" in Scots.¹²⁷ Indeed, even the "ready popularity" which accompanied Young's Aristophanes had come at a cost: to sustain Lallans it had to be made more digestible for Anglophone audiences.¹²⁸ Young had abandoned, by way of dilution and self-censorship, the difficult multilingualism MacDiarmid found admirable in *Auntran Blads*. In its place he sought accessibility, employing Aristophanes to exhibit and preserve Scots while adapting him to the ever-more Anglicized conditions of postwar Britain.

These conditions, and the retreat of literary invention in Scots, Young himself discussed in further detail a few years later in an essay called, "Whither the 'Scottish Renaissance'?"¹²⁹ Despite the advances which he, MacDiarmid, and others had attempted, Young acknowledged that Anglicization had continued unchecked in Scotland, and by 1966, he felt that a new homogeneity of language was taking hold. The shift away from polyglot experiment, utopian vision, and "technical pirouettes" had begun in the 1950s, coinciding with the emergence of *The Movement* and a renewed stress on "rational structure and comprehensible language" in English.¹³⁰ "Lallans-mongers" became, as

124 Young, Letter to Grieve, 13 February 1958 (NLS). MacDiarmid later attended a performance of *The Puddocks* at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe on 29 August 1958. See Grieve, Letter to Young, 20 August 1958 (NLS).

125 MacDiarmid (1958–9) 389, 388.

126 MacDiarmid (1958–9) 389.

127 MacDiarmid (1958–9) 388.

128 MacDiarmid (1958–9) 388.

129 Young (1966).

130 Conquest (1956) xii, xv.

the critic, Robert Conquest (1917–2015) called them, "[r]esidual nuisances like the Social-realists . . . the church-furnishers and the neo-Georgians."¹³¹ In this way the synthetic Scottish modernism envisioned by MacDiarmid slowly began to fade just as the "colloquial use of Scots" itself was, Young explained, "more and more diluted through education and the mass media, with standard English or American."¹³² The pressure to conform to common taste and public expectation was on the rise. Though there was still much to admire in "several of the newer poets" writing in Scots, the climate of contemporary literature had become inhospitable to Lallans. Thus Douglas Young wondered openly whether "the Renaissance is over for the meantime, and [whether] we are in another nadir like that of the *Whistlebinkie* poetasters a century ago, only this time in English."¹³³ Even in the face of this, though, he refused to despair for when surveying the complex history of Scots vernacular across centuries, he saw a common thread: the "comparative discontinuity" at work in "Scottish literary traditions."¹³⁴ Since the country's *peccatum originale*—the adoption of English through the Geneva Bible (1560)—the history of Lallans, he argued, had been marked by a cyclical rise and fall, great work developing "like rivers that disappear from the surface to underground and then reappear unexpectedly miles away."¹³⁵ For this reason, Young expected another renaissance of the Doric, a further rebirth abounding from Scotland's common discontinuity. The vernacular would again find itself "re-distilled," he wrote, "into a purer or stronger form, given a mass-psychological jog to the national consciousness."¹³⁶ With James Bridie's work before him, Young had hoped to see his Aristophanes arise as part of the "mass-psychological jog" MacDiarmid first provoked. But as the desire for literary experiment receded and the political fortunes of the SNP stalled in the 1950s, the modernism of Douglas Young—his ambition to blend "Attic salt into an undiluted Scots

131 Conquest (1956) xii.

132 Young (1966) 395.

133 Young (1966) 394. *Whistle-Binkie*, a serial anthology of Scots poetry and song, first appeared in 1832. Published by Perthshire-born bookseller, David Robertson (1797–1854), the anthology served as "a repository for little known and usually rural poets, to a certain extent helped to conserve the native Doric, which was in danger of extinction." Believing Scots to be best suited for "sentimental, mawkish and comic observation," the anthology was popular and remained in publication until 1890. See Bayne and Taylor (2004); and Carruthers (2009) 58–9.

134 Young (1966) 394.

135 Young (1966) 394.

136 Young (1966) 395.

comparable to neat Scotch”—gave way, forcing Scotland’s Aristophanes into greater “compromise with the public taste.”¹³⁷

Unpublished Archival Material

Correspondence to and from Douglas Young regarding the translations and productions of *The Puddocks* and *The Burdies* (1957–67) Acc.6419, Box 80. National Library of Scotland (NLS), Edinburgh.

Correspondence to and from Douglas Young, C.M. Grieve (“Hugh MacDiarmid”) and Valda Grieve (1939–68) Acc.6419, Box 38a. National Library of Scotland (NLS), Edinburgh.

Lord Chamberlain’s Plays Correspondence File: *Oedipus Rex* 1910/814. British Library (BL), London.

¹³⁷ Young (1958) v. With Ezra Pound serving as foreign editor, Margaret Anderson adopted the epigraph, “Making no Compromise with the Public Taste” for *The Little Review* 4:2 (June 1917).

Classical Reception in Posters of *Lysistrata*: The Visual Debate Between Traditional and Feminist Imagery¹

Alexandre G. Mitchell

In 411 BC, when *Lysistrata* was first performed, it was neither a feminist nor completely a pacifist play.² The Athenian playwright's politics have been debated for a long time, but he seemed to have been more interested in a comical male-female role reversal and an honorable ending to the Peloponnesian war than pacifism and gender equality. Yet these are the two interpretations that have driven most modern performances of the play. As James Robson writes, "These are probably best described as 'adaptations' of *Lysistrata*—works which, while inspired by Aristophanes, are recognizably distinct from the Aristophanic original."³ And these "adaptations" fall perfectly within the remits of classical reception.

The play's reception has been studied from numerous angles (social, political, feminist, activist, etc.),⁴ but not from what I would describe as an archaeological perspective. The aim of archaeology is to re-create the past through the study of material remains and their often limited context. Posters of modern plays are sometimes all that remains to offer a glimpse into past performances. Obviously these sheets of paper can hardly re-create the performances themselves, but their precise date and location, the immediacy of their message and visual cues, their powerful symbols, vivid colors and typography can help us rediscover the "take" on a play by a troupe or a director. A detailed study of posters enables us to re-create the reception of the play, how it was interpreted at a given time and place. I first described this approach regarding

1 I would like to thank Philip Walsh and Stavros Lazaris for their suggestions on improving this paper. All mistakes are my own.

2 As Gomme wrote, Aristophanes was "not a politician but a dramatist . . . whose purpose is to give us a picture . . . not to advocate a policy." See Walsh (2009) for a very subtle and balanced view of the debate. See also Revermann (2011) and Robson in this volume.

3 Robson (2009) 195.

4 For an overview of these different interpretations of the play and the reception of *Lysistrata*, see, for example, Hall and Wrigley (2007); and Stuttard (2011).

past performances when confronted with limited contextual information for a study of the Kabirion sanctuary in Boeotia (central Greece) dating back to classical antiquity.⁵ Indeed, there was a sanctuary dedicated to Kabiros and Pais (attested by inscriptions), discovered in the late nineteenth century by German archaeologists. Hardly anything was known about these gods. Some remaining structures were uncovered dating from the Roman period but very little from the earlier Greek period to explain the presence of over 350 of the most vivid caricatures ever found on pottery in Greek art. The caricatures were stunning but unexplained. Through a number of comparisons between the sanctuary's evidence and other caricatures and parodies on Greek pottery found in Athens, I came to the conclusion that the God Kabiros was a local avatar for the well-known Dionysos, god of wine, celebrations and the upside-down world of carnival. I postulated the existence of a yearly carnival celebrated at the sanctuary. Indeed, it had occurred to me as to a number of other scholars that there is very little material or written evidence that enables us to reconstruct past performances, carnivals, and festivals. How could anyone imagine the pandemonium of the Notting Hill carnival one week prior to the event or one week later were it not for orally passed-on memories, film footage, and photographs?

Today, as in antiquity and throughout the middle-ages, we only have written evidence of carnivals or festivals if something went horribly wrong. Otherwise, these yearly events are so common that they are not worth writing about or setting in stone. This is but a metaphor with regard to the subject of posters of modern plays, but the archaeological method can help to re-create an aspect of *Lysistrata*'s theatrical performances over time. Indeed, setting aside filmed productions, performances are highly volatile in that the only remains of a play are textual adaptations, stage director's notes, a few newspaper clippings and—posters. For the sake of brevity and to exemplify this approach to classical reception, I will only discuss a small selection of posters from the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and France mainly from the last decade, among the hundreds that publicize *Lysistrata* and other plays by Aristophanes. Posters are a fascinating visual medium, whose main function is to publicize a performance (i.e., to sell a product by using appealing and well-known visual references both to attract theatre-goers and to convey the director's interpretation of the play). Indeed, if the design is successful, it will crystallize, in a Stendhal-like manner, the director's adaptation of the play, whether it be the vision of a traditionalist or that of a feminist.

5 On the fleeting nature of performance for an archaeologist, see Mitchell (2009) 250–1.

After a rapid overview of the medium and the use of symbols and visual synecdoches, the paper will show that most posters fall into two main categories: 1) traditional representations of *Lysistrata*, which include references to peace, female refusal to engage in sex, and manipulative women, and which tend to reflect “mainstream” interpretations of the play; and 2) a whole range of feminist representations—from the objectification of women to the feminization of men. The constant visual references to classical antiquity will also be mentioned in passing as famed statues, vases, and temples are often transformed to suit the poster.

Posters have a relatively long history and are perfect mirrors of their time.⁶ Posters were massively produced in the twentieth century with a plethora of functions, be it informational, propagandist, and a number of other categories with a lesser social impact: entertainment posters, theatrical performances, musical concerts, various exhibitions. The medium is a clever combination of words and images. The typography (i.e., the graphic expression of the words) is often as important as the actual written words and can convey a strong message in itself. The colors, composition on the page, and visual references must be striking and particularly well-chosen. The targeted viewers are often in motion or distracted, so the poster must catch their eye instantly and create an emotion. The compositions must anger, shock, arouse, surprise, or amuse the manipulated viewer.

Signs, Symbols, and Synecdoches

Various signs, symbols, and visual synecdoches are used in posters of *Lysistrata* to refer to a number of concepts. Signs have a language of their own; they inform, oblige, warn, prohibit. For instance, the “no entry” sign, a round red sign with a white horizontal bar is internationally recognized as a prohibitory sign often placed at the exit ends of one-way streets. Used by L. Lamblin in a poster of a 2011 French production, (**b6**),⁷ it is cleverly integrated in the guise of a shield protecting a long-legged woman’s mid-section. Another similar sign, a circle or square box with a diagonal line usually indicates something

6 See Gallo (1974), Meggs (1998), Metzl (1963), Timmers (1998), and Weill (1985).

7 “I chose to use black and various shades of orange as a reminder of Greek vases. The red comes mainly from the sign ‘no entry’ because if it was in a different color, it would not be identifiable. The background contains the red in darker tones, to refer to the bloody war and, graphically, to avoid a multitude of colors in the poster. The character is very large as a theater poster should be legible from a distance!” (personal correspondence with the designer).

is forbidden. Another poster, (d9), produced for a performance of *Lysistrata* at the Burton Street Theatre in Darlington in 2004, shows such a sign with the word “SEX” barred in a circle pinned like a small emblem, on the beret of a female version of the iconic and revolutionary Che Guevara. In poster (d5) another sign, resembling a “STOP” sign, in white lettering on a red background, states “NO SEX,” on the upper arm of a “Rosie Riveter” look-alike.

Another sign for forbidden or cancelled is the x-cross, which ironically also “marks the spot,” a visual double-entendre in which poster designers often indulge. In (d2), which publicized a 2011 French production, the designer places an X-cross over a Barbie-doll’s crotch.⁸ Interestingly the cross seems to be made of the kind of tape usually marked with a repeated word like “Fragile” in red letters on a white background found on parcels. The words, in French, *En grève*, mean “on strike,” and are repeated at least five times, the kind of words one would certainly not find on a parcel. Another poster, (b7), illustrating a production in Columbus, Ohio in 2013, shows a woman naked from the waist up, trying to modestly cover her breasts with her hands, one of which holds a dove (a symbol for peace). Just like ancient statues of Aphrodite, it is unclear whether the poor attempt to cover her breasts is a sign of modesty or a form of sexual enticement, especially as her lower garment seems to be sliding off her hips.⁹ The crossed arms, however, clearly indicate that sexual favors are out of the picture. A poster by Redbat design for a 2004 performance in Oregon (b4) places an X-cross over a woman’s mini-skirt roughly over her crotch. This poster uses only white for the lettering and red, black, and grey for the woman, her dress, and the background. The red cross comes off the page but is in perfect unison with the red background and the shape of the cross with a longer leg, a counter-point to the woman’s contrapposto posture. Finally, (b5), a poster by Bryan Smith for a production in 2012 by Colorado University Denver Theatrical Productions, is a simple but very efficient design that shows two tiny soldiers on either side of a giant female body made up of two wavy outlines showing the hips, waist, and breasts. Two large facing crested helmets further delineate the breasts while a third tiny frontal warrior holds two crossed spears, a sign for a no-go area. These spears outline the woman’s inner thighs and transform the small defending warrior into a crotch.

The circular sign with three lines within it was first used in a British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament by Eric Austen in 1958, and has since been widely used as a sign for peace. The sign has been adapted in various ways by poster designers. On (a1), a poster by Dan Shearn for a Core Theatre

8 See the cover of Stuttard (2011), where this is graphically shown by a yellow tape.

9 Havelock (1995) 36.

production in Bath in 2005, the sign, in pink, is placed, like a tag or graffito, on a drawing of a female classical statue's face among other peace mottos discussed further. On (a4), a poster by designer Anna Elizabeth for a production by the Onomatopoeia Theatre Company in 2011, the sign is placed on one of the lenses of a woman's spectacles (the other is covered with a love-heart), as if to say, "she sees life through loving and peaceful glasses." The poster conveys perfectly the adaptation, a modern-day *Lysistrata*, an American idealist who occupies Wall Street with her female friends to try to find a way to save America from itself. On (a5), a poster made for a 2015 theatrical production by the Newfangled Theatre Company of the Department of Performing Arts of North Dakota State University, the sign takes the poster's entire width and three-quarter of its length. Orange and beveled, it looks almost like a slice of orange on the edge of a cocktail glass. The deep pink background and purple female silhouette of a club dancer wearing stilettos and a tight mini skirt leaves us with the impression that this is an evening show for an adult crowd. Also, the apposed red-lipstick lips on the "L" of *Lysistrata* in the title makes the "L" look like a straw.

The next poster, (b3), for a 2009 Canadian production by the Théâtre à l'Ouest, Théâtre au Pluriel and the AUFJSJ in Alberta, is one in a few perfect compositions that combine all the elements of the play at a glance. A red bra is hanging from a downturned machinegun. The cups of the bra are not held by a piece of fabric called a center front gore, but by a Yale padlock. The key in the padlock has a chain with a small but immediately recognizable badge, the "peace sign." The interpretation of the poster is almost mathematical. The only key to open the padlock that keeps the bra together is held by peace, and the tantalizing bra, the promise of future pleasures, keeps the machinegun from firing. The last poster I wish to present that uses the peace sign is (e6). Designed by Okhan Orhan for a 2012 production by the Canadian Dawson Theatre Collective in Quebec, the poster includes a sign that is tattooed on the back of a giant woman's calf, one leg stating "NO PEACE" with the peace sign, and the other "NO SEX" with the sign for love-making. To ensure the viewer identifies these signs as tattoos, the artist added two incongruous Chinese-looking scroll designs on each leg next to the inscriptions.

Symbols are similar to signs, but their impact is far greater in that they represent important concepts. The Canadian poster (b3) discussed earlier displayed a beautiful and effective ensemble of intertwined symbols: the machinegun actually means "War"; the lock and key mean "Permission" or "Prohibition"; and the bra, "Sex" and "Seduction." A large number of our posters are peppered with symbols because of their immediate impact and simplicity. Each symbol is carefully chosen to be understood by most viewers and viewers in a hurry.

We have seen signs for peace, but there are a great number of symbols for peace. I will focus on three main symbols: the olive branch, the dove, and references to 1960s peace movements. An olive branch is held by the female warrior with a “no-entry” shield we have already described above (b6). It is a particularly appropriate symbol for peace as it comes from Greece itself and was an attribute of Eirene, the goddess of Peace.¹⁰ Peace is also conveyed by a dove holding an olive branch in its beak or the dove on its own. This popular motif originates in the Jewish bible (Genesis 8:11), but the peace meaning was promoted by early Christians.¹¹ As doves were Aphrodite’s sacred birds in antiquity, their presence in these posters about a Greek play could be an added if unintentional layer of meaning. For instance, (a2), a poster designed by Bruce Mackley in 2004 for *Lysistrata 2411 A.D., The Musical Comedy*, displays a white dove seated on a naked statuesque woman’s lap, covering her crotch. The meaning of the poster is clear: peace can only be found in one place. (b7), mentioned above, shows a seductive pasty-white skinned woman holding a distinctive light blue and white dove against her breast. The dove’s head is turned towards five spears pointing at the woman from below as if to confront them, peace overcoming war. The other main references to peace are visual references to the 1960s and well-known peace movements like the flower power movement. Poster designers refer to the latter in a number of ways: through famous mottos like “make love not war” found in the form of a graffiti in (a1). Flowers are often used in reference to the flower-power movement. For instance, the graffiti in (a1) where the pink flower around the female statue’s eye looks almost like a black-eye, (a3) where flowers are omnipresent and even in the text: “*Lysistrata*, the ultimate flower power.” The Sock Puppet Guerilla Theater mounted this 2013 Washington production of *Lysistrata* by setting it in 1969.¹² And another poster, (d2), uses a wall-paper background with a repetitive floral pattern. The 1960s are also conveyed by psychedelic colors, shades of pink, purple, orange, and designs as in (a3). The very fat and

10 As is often seen in Roman coinage, but also in earlier literature: see Aristophanes, *Peace* 205ff. “... the greatest of all goddesses, her to whom the olive is so dear.” See also Virgil, *Georgics* 2.425ff.

11 An interesting conflation of both themes is found on a gravestone dating about 500 AD from the San Callisto Catacomb, Rome (Italy). It shows a dove bringing an olive branch to a figure next to whom is written EIRHNE.

12 The play was directed by Jaki Demarest, who offered the following comments on the 1960s: “it felt like the world was coming to an end—yet there was also a sense of real optimism to the age. Passionate activism... the last time there was actually a sense that the actions of a few people could change the world for the better. That a song or a symbol like a flower in a gun could win hearts” (Demarest (2013)).

rounded typography typical of the 1960 titles is also used to recall the period in (a1) where the entire poster is written in that font-style. Interestingly, the origin of this typographic style is found in much earlier, 1900s posters by Alphonse Mucha.

As described above, a poster must have an immediate impact, be informative, catch the viewer's eye, and say everything at a glance. Signs, symbols, and visual synecdoches are not only useful, but they are also necessary. Visual synecdoches are understood as a *pars pro toto*, a part to say the whole. They are not always as effective as signs and symbols as they might be confused with symbols. For instance, in the absence of a female body, a bra (b3, e3), tights/suspenders on an extended leg (c3, c4, c7), or high heeled boots/shoes (c3, c4, e4, e5) can mean "woman," but in some cases, a locked bra can indicate the tantalizing power of forbidden sex, and a dancing female silhouette holding a bra (a3) on a poster of *Lysistrata* 1969 means sexual liberation and freedom rather than "woman."

Similarly, a helmet can mean "man" or "soldier" (c1) when men are not present in the scene. And references to war and weapons are found in many posters. Ancient weapons like swords are often purposefully confused with a male penis if held at the waist. (b1), a 2013 poster by designer Shayna Pond for a production by the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma's theatre arts department, shows a male warrior holding his sword towards a woman in classical attire. His sword is far longer than it should be. The comic confusion between a sword's sheath and a female's vagina was certainly known in antiquity,¹³ and the ambivalent correspondence between swords and penises is quite obvious in most scenes of Menelaus pursuing Helen at Troy on Greek vases in which the hero either holds his sword horizontally from the waist or drops it at the sight of his unfaithful but seductive wife.¹⁴ Incidentally, there is a passage in *Lysistrata* itself where Aristophanes plays on both meanings of ξίφος.¹⁵ Spears, helmets, and shields are also present, but modern weaponry is ubiquitous, including machineguns (b3, c2), bomber planes (b10), and modern military clothing (e4, e5).

13 On κολέον ("sheath"), see Aristaenetus *Rhetor* 2.6; and Henderson (1991) 138.

14 Mitchell (2009) 101; 131; 142, fig. 43.

15 On ξίφος ("sword"), see *Lysistrata* 156, where Lampito describes how Menelaus dropped his sword at the sight of Helen's breasts; and Henderson (1991) 122.

Traditional Imagery

What I consider to be traditional imagery, however original or striking a poster might be in other ways, consists in a typically non-feminist iconography that conveys conventional interpretations of the play. Three categories stand out: 1) the female refusal of all men's advances; 2) women coming between groups of men; and 3) manipulative seducers of men.

The first category does not include any images of empowerment or confrontation, only women refusing men's advances. How is this conveyed visually? We have already seen two signs, the "no entry" prohibitory sign and the ambivalent "X"-cross sign which indicate a refusal without any confrontation. There are at least three other visual cues. The first is padlocks. We described earlier one padlock (**b3**) which had a peace sign attached to its key, but the other two are far more interesting as they are attached to chastity belts. One poster (**b2**), designed for a 2012 French production, "L'Atelier theatre" from the Université du Maine in Le Mans, displays a female body wearing a chastity belt. The image has a medieval feel to it, resembling the small sculpted figures that enliven the front porches of gothic cathedrals. It is quite telling and appropriate for an illustration of *Lysistrata* that this woman should hold the key to her own belt. Another poster, (**b1**), shows a woman wearing a kind of chastity belt made of skimpy *chiton* secured with a padlock. The second visual cue consists in turning her back to a man, a clear gesture of disinterest and a clear non-verbal means of stating one's refusal to engage with another. On (**b9**), designed for a Syracuse University Boar's Head Theatre production of *Lysistrata* in 1954, the woman in classical dress is literally walking away from an entreating soldier in full garb, whereas on the poster we have discussed above, (**b1**), the woman is only turning her head away from the man's advances. The third visual cue is the "stop" gesture (i.e., a raised open-palm hand). It is an alternative to the "no entry" and "X"-cross signs and is a clear indication of refusal. The woman wearing a chastity belt on poster (**b1**) raises her hand at an advancing soldier, whose sword is elongated to resemble an erect penis, an allusion to the enormous phalli often worn by male actors performing this play.

A well-known poster (**b8**) designed by Kirsten Ulve for the 2011 Broadway musical *Lysistrata Jones* shows a woman, wearing a blue and white dress decorated with Greek meanders, doing the same gesture. The whole take of that adaptation on the original play is far from being conventional. In this musical, cheerleaders go on a sex-strike to encourage their university's basketball team, "the Spartans" (shown dribbling in formation), to improve their appalling athletic performance. The gesture is also clearly shown on the 1954 poster, (**b9**), and on an unusual poster, (**b10**), by designer Christina Sund for 2015

Cambridge performance of *Lysistrata* set in the 1940s. On the latter, the silhouette of a naked woman makes the stop gesture at a naked man holding his hands in his back while a squadron of at least seventeen airplane bombers fly above them. The chosen cubist style and colors for the skyline and background are reminiscent of World War I, but the bombers would date back to World War II. The poster is, in fact, inspired from a famous World War II poster, (b11), entitled “Women of Britain—Come into the Factories” (1941), by Philip Zec, encouraging women to engage into the war industry for the good of the nation. The poster shows a woman with open arms while numerous fighter planes seem to leave the factory. The same number of planes, drawn the same way and in the same perspective, are reproduced in the *Lysistrata* poster. Also, the black hill the two characters are standing on corresponds to the black background to the text of the propagandist 1941 poster. Thus, the *Lysistrata* poster has in fact parodied the design of a poster encouraging the war effort among women to put forward an entirely different message: a resounding female “NO” to war. Another poster, (b12), by designer Andi Best for a production by the University of Bournemouth’s Theatre and Dramatic Arts department in 2008, is also inspired by Philip Zec’s poster. The artist has given a light pink touch to the poster with Greek meanders on either side and cleverly transformed the “black hill” into the Acropolis. A temple is clearly visible at the top of the hill. The woman is half naked with flowing hair and two peaceful doves place fig (?) leaves on her nipples.

The second category of traditional imagery consists in women coming between men. The sex-strike motif is not obvious in those scenes. Women seem to be the ones brokering a deal between warring men. This category of images is well-known since Norman Lindsay illustrated *Lysistrata* in 1924.¹⁶ The famous cover of this book was probably inspired from Jacques-Louis David’s famous painting, *The Intervention of the Sabine Women* (1798), in which the central female figure with arms wide apart attempts to stop her male family members from killing each other.¹⁷ In addition to (b5) and (c1), both described above, one elegant poster, (e3), designed by Amy Watt for a production of the play in 2012 by the Edinburgh University Classics Society, shows two dueling warriors preparing to strike at each other when a giant red bra comes between them. The designer comments on her website that “The bra in-between the fighting men represents the oath of abstinence that the women took to stop

16 For more on Lindsay’s illustrations, see Walsh (2008) 193–4.

17 Paris, Musée du Louvre, 3691. See Rosenblum (1989).

the war.”¹⁸ The outline of the Parthenon on the Acropolis is easily recognizable in the background.

The third category of traditional imagery concerns seductive women. This typical female stereotype undermines the nature of the play. Rather than showing the women's strength in opposing men and occupying the Acropolis, these posters focus on manipulative women who use their seductive powers to toy with men. In the original play, men were reduced to their primal selves, driven by one shared vulnerability, their need for sex. But some posters insist on the way women act upon this vulnerability in an almost devious form of manipulation. Covert aggression, or manipulation, can take many guises, but generally includes ruthlessness, concealment of one's real motives, and knowing the victim's psychological vulnerabilities to choose the most effective tactics.¹⁹ These images are almost demeaning to women in presenting them as wolves in sheep's clothing, gaining trust and access to innocent and unsuspecting victims they have seduced. In (c1), a mock-up poster designed by Ruiya in 2004, a dancing woman is seen through a door keyhole. She holds the key to the door over her head and winks at the viewer. We are far from the proud Lysistrata and closer to a woman enticing a peeping Tom. In (c3), a clever pastiche of an Attic red-figure vase painting designed by Okhan Orhan in 2012 for the Canadian Dawson Theatre Collective production, shows in the foreground a woman putting on tights being gawked at by a warrior who seems to be about to drop his spear.²⁰ We find a similar close-up of a woman's legs in (c4), a black-white poster by designer Jonalyn Recto for a 2006 production by the Hampton Players at Hampton University in Virginia, with enough details to identify a dominatrix (e.g., shiny black stilettos, silky tights, whip, and black gloves). Yet another woman's leg in suspenders and tights is shown on (c7), a poster designed by Michele DiMuzio for *Lysistrata the Vaudeville*, a New York production by the Musical Theatre Factory in 2015, where interestingly the entire image is made to look like a mosaic. Just as the parody of a Greek vase (c3) was a way to rekindle with the classical past, using a mosaic background is a visual cue for “antiquity.”²¹

¹⁸ Watt (2012).

¹⁹ See Bjorkqvist (1994).

²⁰ This poster was finally rejected, and another, (e6), was chosen instead.

²¹ These images may be inspired by the iconic 1967 *The Graduate* movie poster which shows a young Dustin Hoffman gawking at Anne Bancroft's leg (Linda Gray's as it turned out) rolling on a stocking. There are a number of other posters of Lysistrata on the same theme: e.g. a similar poster for a performance of *Lysistrata* in 2014 at the Storre Theatre presented by the SPIN Theatre Company, Luther College, Iowa.

Probably the most striking and successful illustration of a dangerous woman striking the sensual pose is (c6), a poster designed by the company designarmy for a 2009 production by Georgetown University Theatre and Performance studies, in collaboration with Syntetic Theater in Washington, DC, in which a nude woman is drawn as if she were made of barbed-wire. She crosses her legs, wears platform high heels, throws her long hair back, and presses her hands behind her down on a surface (on the title, *Lysistrata*) to push out her chest. To say that this woman is prickly would be an understatement. Another poster, (c8), designed for a 1994 production for the Babcock theatre, Sweet Briar College in Virginia, parodies two famous Hellenistic sculptures simply by positioning them in an unusual and comical fashion. The original bronze *Boxer at Rest* from the National Museum of Rome is seated, looking to his right and upwards.²² In the poster, he is positioned in the foreground, looking left and upwards to a towering Venus of Milo in the background.²³ Her breasts are covered by the title *Lysistrata*. The meaning is clear: a subdued fighter and a glorious and victorious naked breasted goddess. Choosing a statue with no arms, however, may not have been the most judicious decision.

However, two recent posters go far beyond all other images of seducers. The first, (c2), a poster designed for the University of Western Australia's French Club, at the Dolphin Theatre in 2015 and performed in French, literally shows a silhouette of a female puppeteer, holding a male lifeless, crucified puppet with her strings surrounded by other tiny male soldier silhouettes in front of a cut-out façade of the Parthenon in flames. The second, (c5), a poster designed by Harry Twigg for a 2015 production by Theatrical Niche Ltd, shows a very elegant and seductive woman playing chess. The text on the poster reads as follows: "One woman's battle to end the Peloponnesian war. The only weapon she has is sexuality . . . but she knows how to use it." Interestingly, the performance also includes puppetry.²⁴ These last two posters really insist on the manipulative nature of women who use sex as a commodity, or a means to an end, rather than a pleasurable end.

²² Rome, National Roman Museum (Palazzo Massimo alle Terme), 1055.

²³ Paris, Louvre Museum, Ma399.

²⁴ As Twigg explains, "We staged an outrageous and visually stunning new production to incorporate physical comedy, puppetry and of course—mask work" (Twigg (2015)).

Feminist Imagery

In contrast to the last category, feminist propaganda has taken over numerous performances of *Lysistrata* and thus the posters publicizing these performances too. Some posters make overt direct references to feminist activist movements, like the slick French poster, (d3), by Sidonie Guiton (photography) and Sébastien Quencez (design) for a 2013 production by Théâtre Exalté and the drama school *Arts en scène*, which shows the backs of three women, wearing jeans and naked from the waist up. Their backs are covered in slogans: the first one reads “History is Her Story too,” the second “WAR” (crossed-out), and the third “Crossed legs movement.” The first slogan “History is Her story too” could be a reference to “Herstory,” a 1960s neologism with a false etymology based on “history,” coined by Robin Morgan to critique conventional historiography and encourage historians to write history from a woman’s perspective and to emphasize the role of women in history. The last slogan is particularly fascinating as it is a real case of *Lysistrata* in action, when the women of a small town called Barbacoas in Columbia went on a sex-strike, known as the *crossed legs movement*, in 2011 after years of campaigning with the central government to pave a road linking their town to the rest of the province.²⁵ But the immediate visual reference in this poster is to FEMEN, the radical feminist protest group originally founded in Ukraine in 2008 and now based in Paris, which became famous for organizing controversial topless protests with black writing on their breasts and backs, promoting “sextremism to protect women’s rights.”²⁶ The *Lysistrata* poster shows them turning their backs, probably to avoid shocking the general audience, unlike FEMEN activists.

One image which is often re-used and transformed by feminist activists is the Westinghouse “We can do it” poster, (d4), often mistakenly referred to as the “Rosie the Riveter” poster, after the iconic World War II “Rosie the Riveter” character.²⁷ This poster, created by Pittsburgh artist J. Howard Miller, was an American wartime propaganda poster produced in 1943 to boost worker morale among the employees of the Westinghouse company. The poster was hardly seen in the 1940s, but it was rediscovered in the 1980s and re-used by advocates of women’s equality in the workplace and since then by feminists worldwide. This last interpretation of the poster is the inspiration for the *Lysistrata* posters (d5), (d6), and (d7). The meaning of the woman’s gesture in the original poster is clear: she is pulling up her sleeve to get down

²⁵ See Montes (2011).

²⁶ See Holman (2013).

²⁷ See Kimble and Olson (2006).

to work ("We can do it"), just like in the "classicized" poster (d7), designed Josh Levitas for *The Lysistrata Project*, a 2013 Simpatico theatre production. But in (d5), a poster designed for a 2009 production by The Orange Coast College Theatre Department, the woman is wearing a classical sleeveless female dress, and in (d6), a poster by Katie Metz for a show performed by Acting Out at Northeastern University in 2013, she is wearing a sleeveless bustier dress. The woman's gesture could be understood as something entirely different as she has no sleeves to pull up. Her arm is bent in an L-shape, with the closed fist pointing upwards, while the other hand grips the biceps of the bent arm. This is a widely known obscene gesture with the same meaning as giving the finger. In Italy and France, the middle finger of the bent arm is also raised to add emphasis to the gesture called in French *un bras d'honneur*. The gesture is known as "under the arm" in the UK and "giving the arm" or the "Italian salute" in the US. Could Lysistrata be giving the finger to men or war? (d8), a poster created for Charles Sturt University (CSU) Cycle Productions and the School of Communication & Creative Industries which produced an adaptation of the play in Bathurst in 2014, is a photograph of the stage performance, which, according to the subheading, is "An ancient Greek comedy set in a cabaret style of 1940s wartime." The three actresses look like Rosie the Riveter, but the lineup of the three smiling characters in a diagonal resembles Chinese propaganda posters of the 1960s promoting the so-called cultural revolution, something that was probably unintended by the poster designer.

Something feminists rightly criticize still today is the medium's constant objectification of women, and Mattel's Barbie dolls are often criticized as examples of this objectification. Young girls who play with Barbie dolls are really being told that having a certain kind of beauty and body type is what matters most. It should not come as a surprise that Barbie dolls are (ab)used in a 2011 French adaptation of *Lysistrata*, by the company Déclic Théâtre, with two different posters as the play was performed number of times between 2011 and 2013. (d1) shows the main actress holding a Barbie doll dressed in a *chiton* and two huge pigtails as if it were a flag pole or a standard, and brandishing it up close to the viewer's face. The advertising for this 2013 performance reads as follows: "And, in order to represent the assembly of women on one side and the warriors on the other, all one needs is a man, a woman and "puppets," or rather dolls, contemporary symbols of a certain ideal, Barbie and Ken, brandished by the actors, will finally have their say!"²⁸ The original poster, (d2), shows a nude headless and limbless Barbie doll which looks like a dislocated or broken puppet. The meaning of the poster is to break conventional objectifying imagery

28 Déclic théâtre (2011), my translation.

of women with the added humor of the *en grève* sign already discussed above, which further commoditizes the object as a “fragile” and broken image.

The final poster to be discussed in this section, (d9), designed a play performed at the Burton Street Theatre in Darlington in 2004, portrays a female version of the iconic photograph taken by Alberto Korda on March 5, 1960, of the Latin-American revolutionary Che Guevara. The poster reads: “The war of the sexes, Greek style. A classic comedy about the two things men hold most dear: war and sex. And what women hold even dearer: peace.” The focus here is on a war of the sexes, and less so on achieving peace. This is why we find such revolutionary references and particularly the visual homage to Che Guevara: the female struggle is compared to that of the famous revolutionary who fought as an underdog against the establishment in Cuba and throughout South America. Maybe the designer’s intention was to present women’s struggle against an all-male establishment like Che Guevara’s revolution of the masses against oppressive regimes. Korda’s photograph only became iconic in later years, after the publisher Giacomo Feltrini used this picture in trying to raise awareness about the revolutionary’s impending execution. After his execution in 1967, people rallied throughout the world brandishing Che Guevara’s photograph or pop-art versions of it. The bright white female face in the drawing looks far more like a mask than a real face and the seriousness of the Che (he was at a memorial service when the photograph was taken). His faraway gaze and his everyday man’s beret are all lost in this poster where the woman is wearing eye liner and eye shadow, smiles, and wears lipstick, as a counterpoint to the red background. The designer had to make hard choices, and the play is no tragedy after all.

Contemporary feminists are far more goal-oriented than in the past. Today their main focus is to obtain equal rights at work and empowering disenfranchised women at every echelon of society. In the past, in the turmoil of a veritable war of the sexes, there may have been some confusion between the need to empower women and the temptation of overpowering men. In Aristophanes’ original play, women were not really shown overpowering men. However, a great number of posters promote this interpretation of Lysistrata’s followers. Rather than empowering women it produces a mixed-message, closer to caricature than engaged feminism. For instance, on (e1), the 1995 poster of a performance of the play at King’s College London, a schematically drawn naked woman in white is crushing with her foot a nude man drawn in red, wearing a helmet and groveling belly down in the dirt, at the foot of the Acropolis. The fallen warrior seems to be struggling to rise, pushing himself up with one arm from the ground and a foot in the air. The play was performed in ancient Greek, but this deeper knowledge of the original play did not curb the visual

impression given by the poster. A poster with a similar meaning, (e2), designed for a 2011 adaptation produced by The Boise State University Theater Majors association (TMA), shows two men in plain-colored loincloths bowing all the way down to the ground on either side of an exulting woman, standing higher than her male subordinates and shouting for joy with her arms erect above her head in a bright red dress. The poster is visually arresting, but the point of the original play seems to have been “missed” once again: it was not to crush men but force them to agree to women’s peaceful terms. At the end of the play, she recedes as the men agree to peace and then drink and party.

The easiest way of showing men crushed by women is to draw them in different sizes, like the puppeteer we already described in (c2), or the cleverly drawn large woman in (b5) with just a few elements coming between two tiny soldiers. The poster of the Broadway musical *Lysistrata Jones*, (b8), shows a girl as tall as the entire poster making a stop sign with her hand at a tiny team of basketball players/soldiers. We have also seen the poster (e3) in which an enormous woman drops her very visible red bra between dueling men. *Size matters*, and gigantism is even better. The next three posters show Godzilla-like gigantic women crushing men.

One poster, (e4), designed for a 2009 production by Phare Play Productions at the Wing Theatre in New York, shows a giant pair of bright red stars and stripes vinyl boots about to crush one man and six tiny toy soldiers who seem to make entreating gestures. The subheading reads “In the battle of the sexes, who ever said women played fair?” Everything about the poster is militaristic, even the typography, which is the one used in army dog tags. The platform boots decorated with the US flag about to knock down the tiny plastic men are incongruous, but they really mock warring men who play with toy soldiers as boys and continue to play war as grown men. It is unfortunate that the adaptation’s contemporary political undertones are not conveyed in the poster—i.e., the women of *Lysistrata* withholding sex until the parties can finally agree on a healthcare plan to unify Greece. The crushing boot is replaced by high heels on another poster, (e5), for a Running with Scissors production of the play performed in 2003 at the Viaduct Theatre in Chicago. The footwear has changed, but the effect is the same: a long sexy leg in tights and high heels, about to crush the Parthenon and a tiny soldier in a full modern military outfit, wearing a helmet and about to throw a grenade at the giant leg. The poster designer made the entire poster in different shades of pink, to give it a “girly” feel, including the lettering for the title of the play. The contrast between the colors, the lettering, and the tiny bow on the open shoe with the fact that the shoe is about to crush a soldier is effective. Finally, (e6) is the only poster that actually shows half a giant woman rather than just a crushing foot

or leg, towering over a tiny Parthenon, which reads “make love not war” written on a white sheet hanging from the *tympanon*. She is taller than the Eiffel tower, the television tower in Berlin, and other famous skylines shown in silhouette in the background. The inspiration of the poster might be the numerous Godzilla movies or the more straightforward low-budget 1958 movie *Attack of the 50 Foot Woman* produced by Bernard Woolner for Allied Artists Pictures, which has attracted a cult following, but clearly its stunning poster is far more famous than the movie itself.

The one poster that goes all the way—that is beyond overpowering and crushing men—is (e7), which shows a full role-reversal and feminization of a warrior. This hilarious poster, designed for *Lysistrata* (*la grève du sexe*), produced by the Zéfiro Théâtre company in 2005 at the Parisian Théâtre 13, shows a neo-classical statue (possibly of seventeenth- or eighteenth-century French origin?) of a warrior with a luscious beard, maybe Mars the god of war, putting on tights. If this was not surprising enough, the really incongruous element is his pink and white spotted women’s briefs.²⁹

Conclusion

The array of visual cues and references used by poster designers in publicizing performances of Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata* is simply staggering. Only forty posters have been referred to in this paper out of a huge number of illustrations of *Lysistrata* and other plays by Aristophanes.³⁰ Nevertheless, these few posters convey almost every possible interpretation of the play from the more traditional themes to the latest feminist movements. Most of these posters would manage to catch the eye of a busy viewer walking down the street; they make clever visual puns, and refer to antiquity, feminist values, sexual innuendoes, anti-war protests, and, of course, to other famous posters. The visual references are sometimes obvious like a chastity belt or naked female statues; other times they are more subtle, like fat and rounded lettering or psychedelic

29 We have come across many references to antiquity in these various posters: in words, clothing, and various weapons or military garb. However, some references are more distinctly classical than others and can be organized into four types: 1) references to neo-classical or Greek or Roman statues (a1, a2, c8, e7); 2) Greek vases (c3); 3) ancient mosaics (c7); and 4) architectural elements, usually the Parthenon or simply the Acropolis (c2, e1, e3, e5, e6).

30 This paper is based on my database collating a few hundred posters of *Lysistrata* and other plays by Aristophanes.

visual cues to remind the viewer of the peace movements of the 1960s. The complexity of the medium is as exciting as the means at the disposal of the illustrators to impact the tired eyes of an audience living in the audio-visual age. Among the many small discoveries I made analyzing these posters, what surprised me most was the fact that most of these plays were produced by universities and that many anti-war *Lysistrata* posters were inspired by successful posters encouraging the war effort during World War II.³¹

31 Disclaimer: Significant effort was made to secure permissions from the artists or designers whose work is featured in this chapter or from the copyright holders. We welcome those who feel that their material has been unrightfully reproduced to come forward.

CORE THEATRE PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS : ARISTOPHANES'

LYSISTRATA

DIRECTED BY: CHARLIE REDDICLIFFE

SHOWING AT THE MISSION THEATRE
WEDNESDAY 3RD TO SATURDAY 6TH MAY

TICKETS: ADULTS £7.50
CONCESSIONS £5.50 (WITH A VALID NUS CARD)

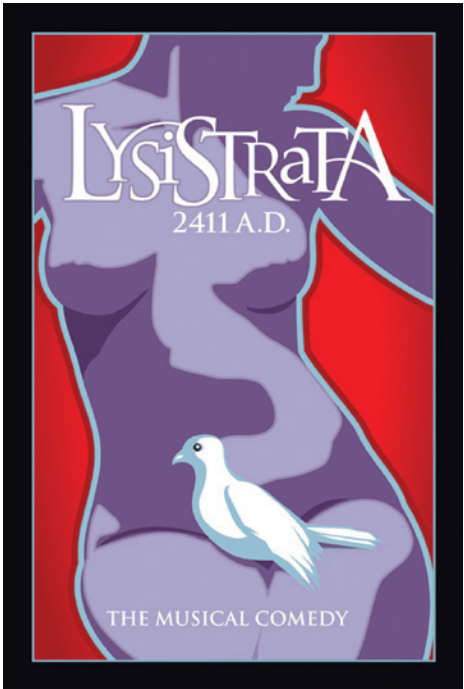
BOOK ONLINE @ WWW.CORETHEATRE.ORG
OR PHONE 07931 356 071

SHOW STARTS 7.30 PM

THERE IS A BAR FOR REFRESHMENTS | DOORS OPEN 7.00 PM



A1
C. Reddicliffe (dir.), Mission Theatre (UK).
© 2005 DAN SHEARN.



LYSISTRATA

2411 A.D.

THE MUSICAL COMEDY

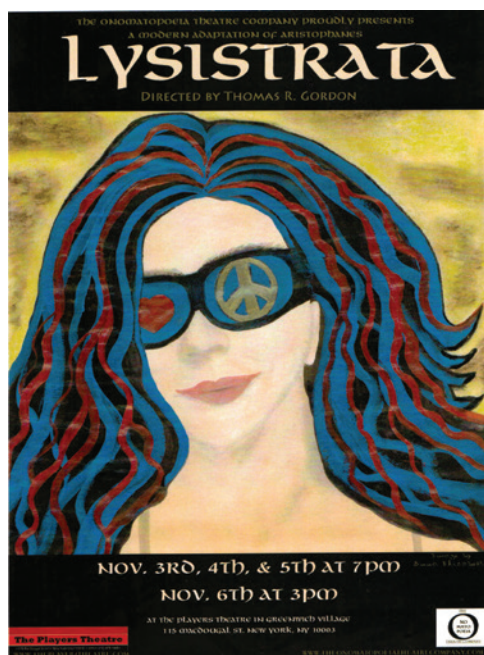
A2
M. Matzke (dir.), LCC Theatre (USA).
© 2004 LANSING COMMUNITY COLLEGE.



A3

J. Demarest (dir.), The Sock Puppet Guerilla Theater (USA).

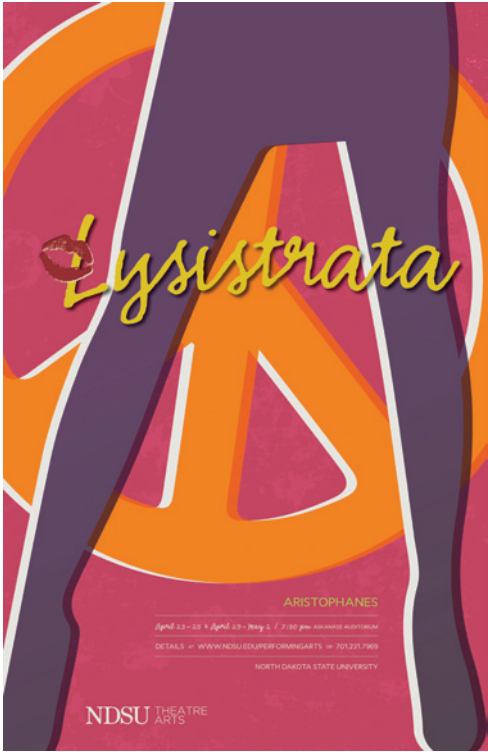
© 2013 JAKI DEMAREST.



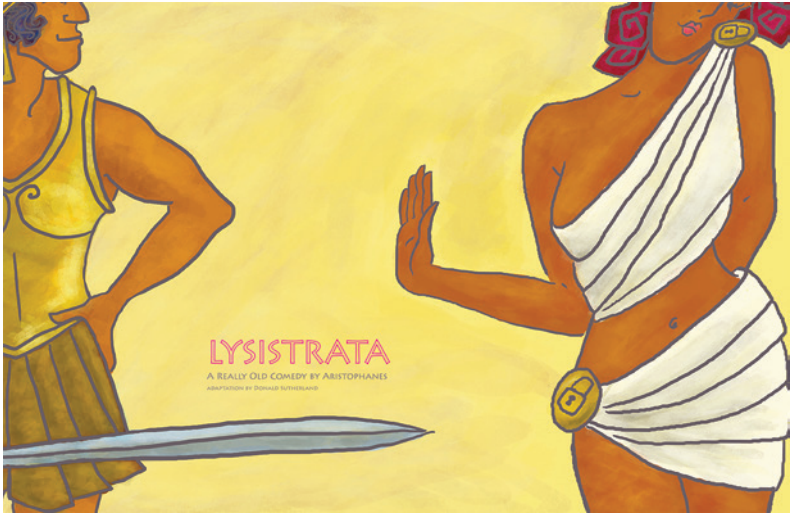
A4

T. R. Gordon (adapt.), Onomatopoeia Theatre Company (USA).

© 2011 ANNA ELIZABETH.



A5
C. Pace (adapt.), *Newfangled Theatre Company* (USA, 2015).
© NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY. DESIGNER: KATIE ELENBERGER.



B1 K. Davis (dir.), *U. of Science and Arts of Oklahoma, Theatre Arts Department* (USA).
© 2009 SHAYNA POND.



B2

P. Sarzacq (dir.), L'Atelier Théâtre de l'Université du Maine (France, 2012).

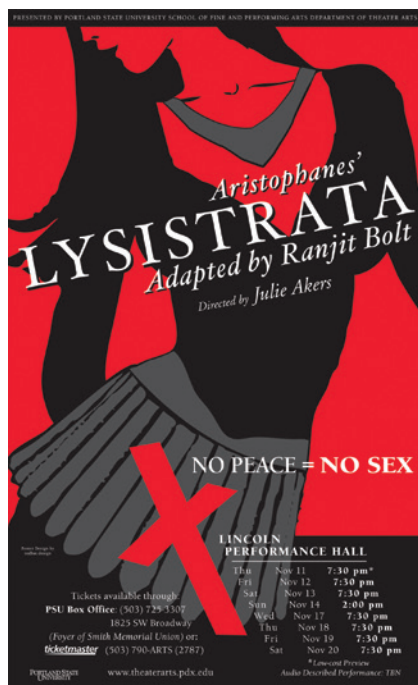
© ATUM.



B3

B. Salva (dir.), Théâtre à l'Ouest (Canada, 2009).

© BERNARD SALVA.



B4

J. Akers (dir.), Lincoln Performance Hall (USA, 2004).

© KRISTIN SUMMERS, REDBAT DESIGN.



B5

C. Bloom (dir.), King Center Production Studio (USA).

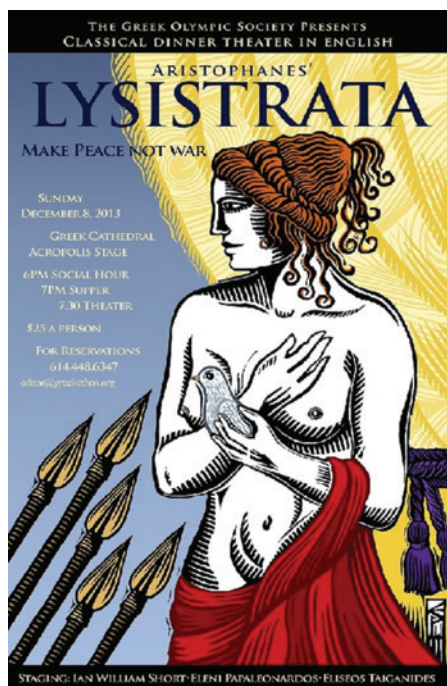
© 2012 BRYAN SMITH MEDIA.



B6

R. Acquaviva (dir.), Sudden Théâtre (France, 2011).

© LULU INTHESKY.



B7

I.W. Shott, E. Papaleonardos, E. Taiganides (dir.), Greek Cathedral Acropolis Stage (USA, 2013).

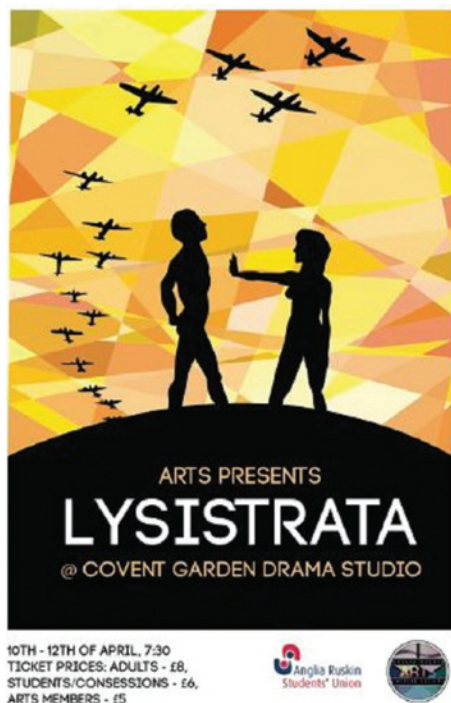
© EVANGELIA PHILIPIDIS (www.GreekEthos.org).



B8
K. Johns (dir.), Broadway Musical (USA, 2011).
© KIRSTEN ULVE.



B9
S. Falk (dir.), Syracuse University Boar's Head Theatre Production (USA, 1954).
© SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY.



B10

(dir.?), Anglia Ruskin University
Student Union (UK, 2015).

© CHRISTINA SUND (DESIGNER).



B11

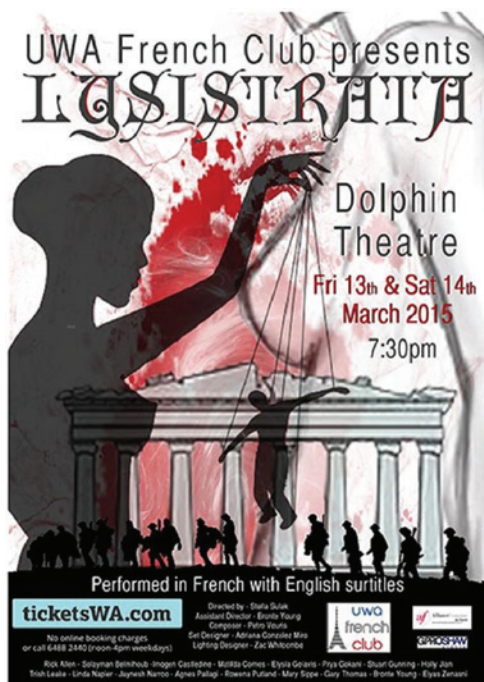
"Women of Britain—Come into the
Factories" by Philip Zec, 1941.



B12
(dir.?), University of Bournemouth
Theatre and Dramatic Arts
Department (UK, 2008).
© ANDI BEST (DESIGNER).



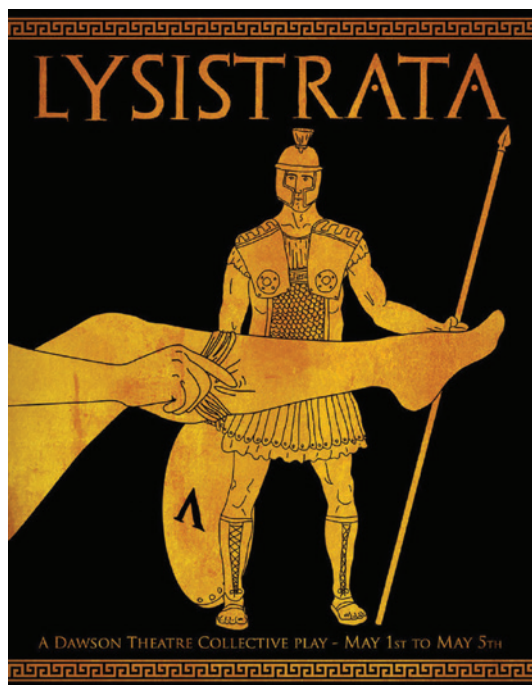
C1
© 2004 Ruiaya (designer, www.deviantart.com).



C2

Stella Sulak (dir.), Dolphin Theatre (Australia).

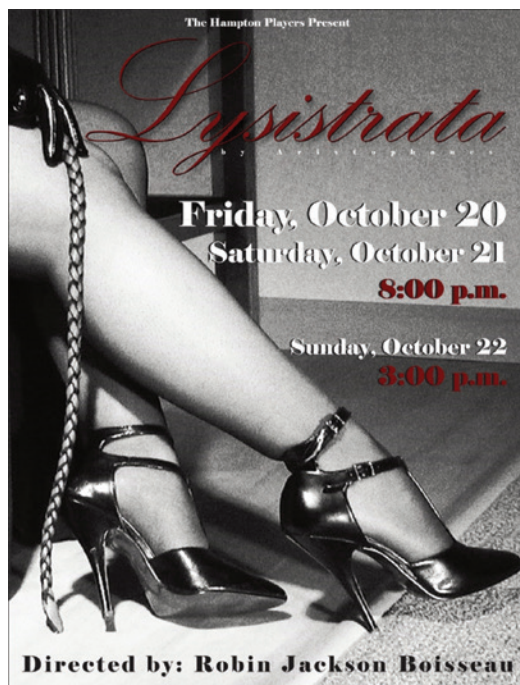
© 2015 STELLA SULAK.



C3

*1st version (see E6 below).
A. Lambert (dir.), Dawson
Theatre Collective (Canada,
2012).*

© OKHAN ORHAN (www.
okhanorhan.com).



C4

R.J. Boisseau (dir.), *The Hampton Players* (USA, 2006).

© JONALYN RECTO.



C5

C. Sillett (dir.), *Theatrical Niche Ltd* (UK, 2015).

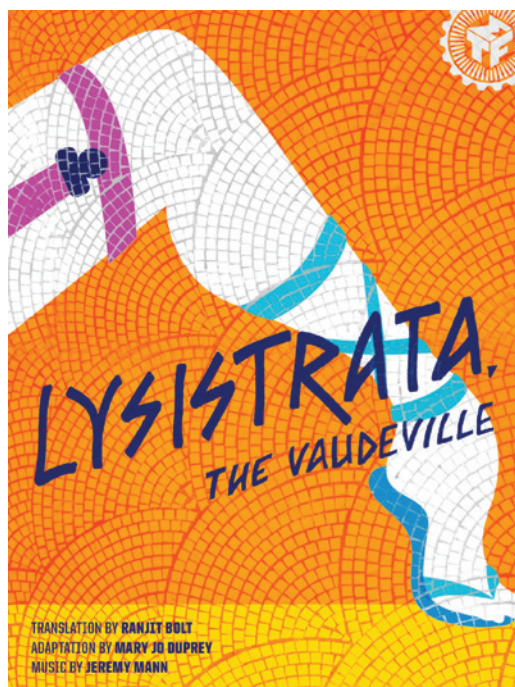
© HARRY TWIGG.



C6

D. Goldman (dir.), Georgetown University Theatre and Performance Studies Program (USA, 2009).

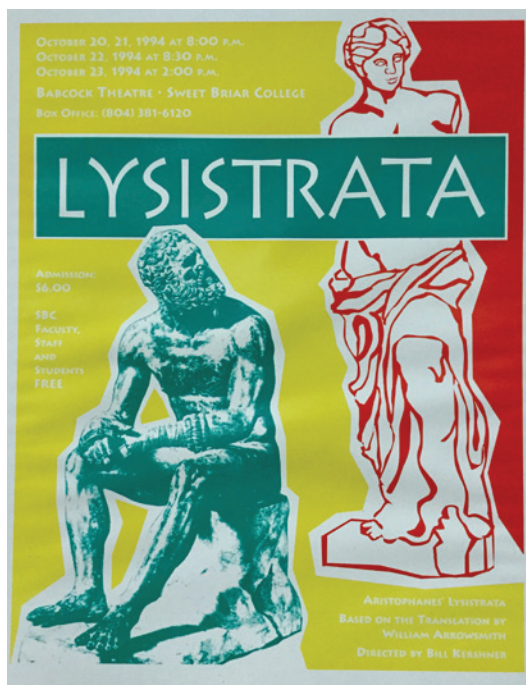
© DESIGN ARMY, WASHINGTON, D.C.



C7

M.J. Duprey (dir.), Musical Theatre Factory (USA, 2015).

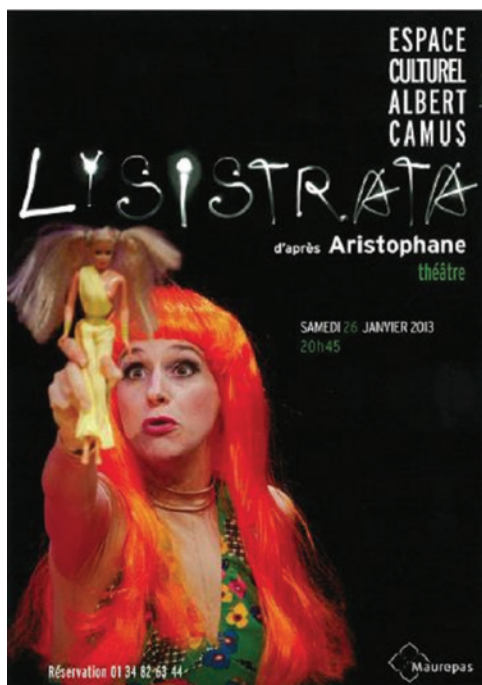
© MICHELLE DIMUZIO FOR MUSICAL THEATRE COMPANY.



C8

B. Kershner (dir.), Babcock Theatre (USA, 1994).

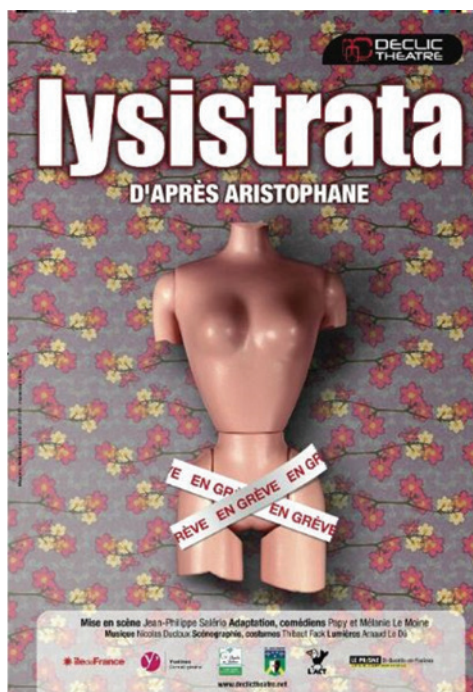
© COURTESY OF SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE.



D1

J.-P. Salério (dir.), Espace Culturel Albert Camus (France, 2011).

© COMPAGNIE DÉCLIC THÉÂTRE.



D2

J.-P. Salério (dir.), Espace Culturel Albert Camus (France, 2013).

© COMPAGNIE DÉCLIC THÉÂTRE.



D3

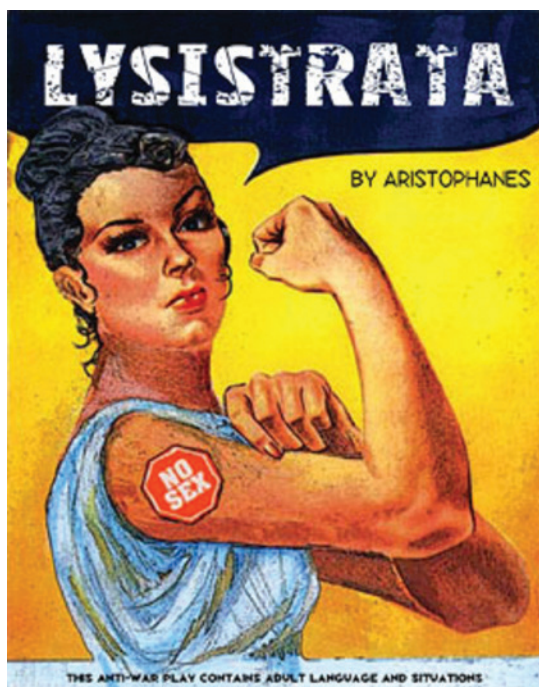
B. Guiton (dir.), *Le Théâtre Exalté*
(France, 2013).

© SÉBASTIEN QUENCEZ, SIDONIE
GUITON, LE THÉÂTRE EXALTÉ.



D4

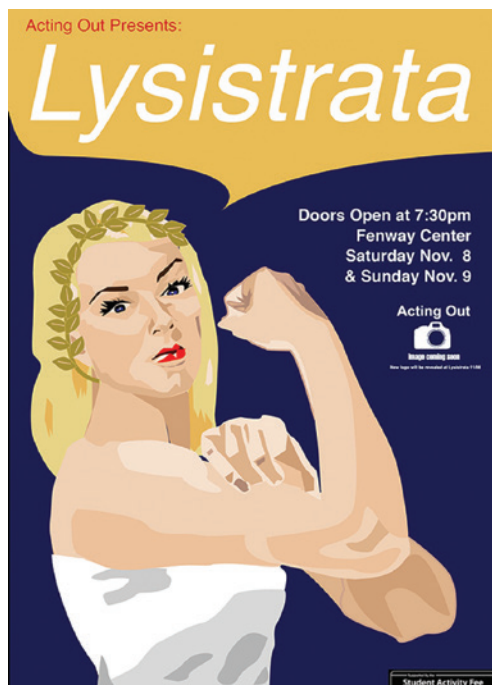
*"We Can Do It!", Westinghouse
(USA, 1943) by J. Howard Miller.*



D5

*A. Golson (dir.), Robert B. Moore
Theatre (USA, 2009).*

© COURTESY OF ORANGE
COAST COLLEGE, COSTA MESA,
CA.



D6

*T. Tanner (asst. dir.), Fenway Center
(USA, 2014).*

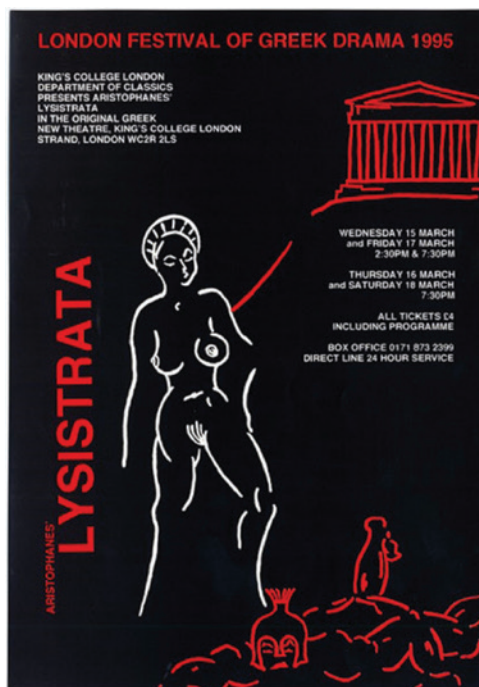
© KATIE METZ.



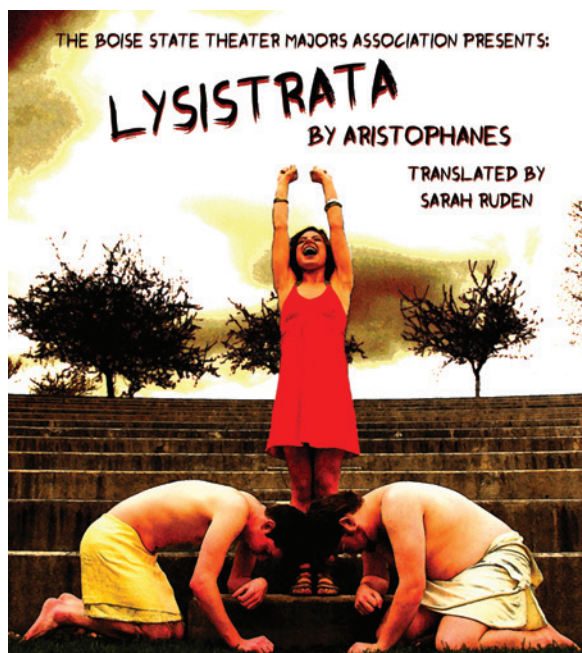
D7

*P.S. Bauer (dir.), Simpatico Theatre
Project (USA, 2013).*

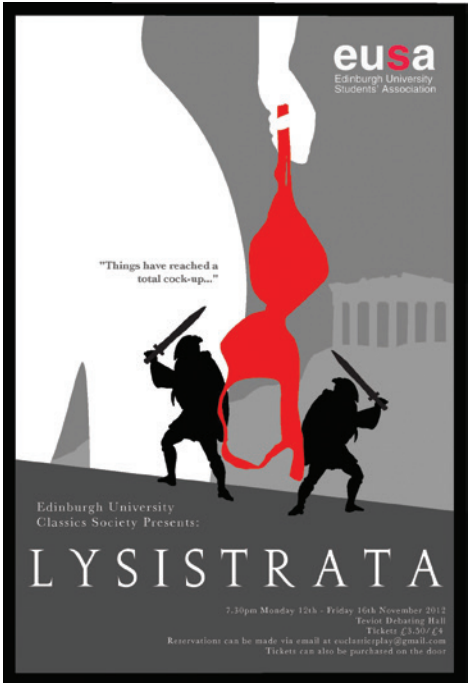
© SIMPATICO THEATRE PROJECT,
DESIGN RADWAY/LEVITAS, PHOTO
KATHRYN RAINES.



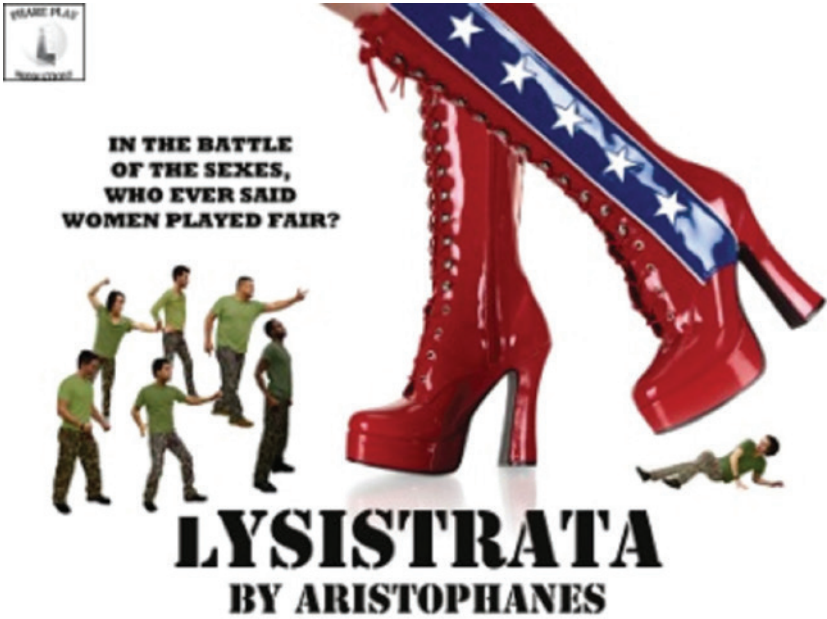
E1
 (dir.?), *New Theatre, King's College London (UK, 1995)*.
 © PIA HAROLD, DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS, KING'S COLLEGE LONDON.



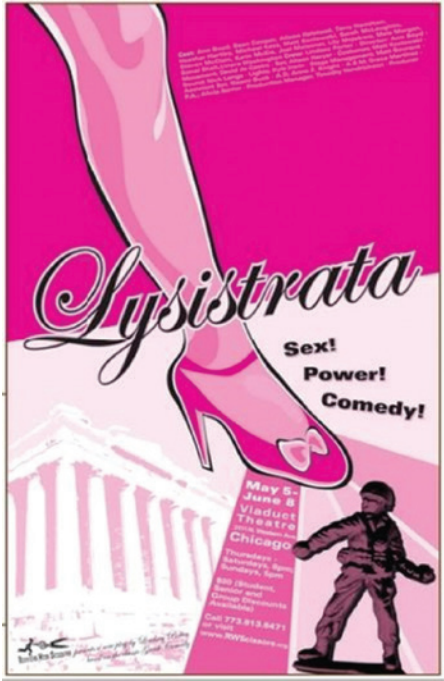
E2
 (dir.?), *Morrison Center Danny Peterson Theatre (USA, 2011)*.
 © THE BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY THEATER MAJORS ASSOCIATION.



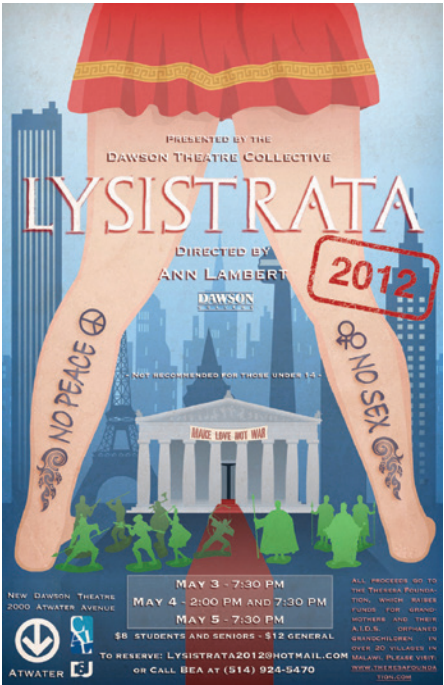
E3
(dir.?), *Edinburgh University Classics Society* (UK, 2012).
© AMY WATT (www.amywatt.co.uk).



E4
(dir.?), *Wing Theatre in New York* (USA, 2009).
© PHARE PLAY PRODUCTIONS.



E5
(dir.?), Viaduct Theatre, Chicago (USA, 2003).
© RUNNING WITH SCISSORS PRODUCTION.



E6
A. Lambert (dir.), Dawson Theatre Collective (Canada, 2012).
© OKHAN ORHAN (www.okhanorhan.com).

6 septembre > 16 octobre 2005

LYSISTRATA (LA GRÈVE DU SEXE)

Comédie en masques et marionnettes
D'après Aristophane
Mise en scène **Rafael Bianciotto**

Direction Colette Nucci www.theatre13.com
THÉÂTRE 13
183 A, boulevard Auguste Blanqui - 75013 PARIS 13^e arrondissement
RÉSERVATION > 01 45 88 62 22

Avec **Ombline de Benque, Nicolas Bland-Maudouit ou Sylvain Juret, Frédérique Charpentier, Laetitia Hipp, Harald Leander et Valérie Pangallo**

Texte français de Hubert Cornu-Rennesson. Collaboration artistique Marie Sazdovitch. Adaptation mise en scène Eric Tioat. Musique Étienne Champigneulle. Costumes Marlene Saenen. Musique Vincent Boucard. Marionnettes Ombline de Benque (Stratagèmes du bonhomme) Samir Jean Griseau. Chorégraphie Nathalie Van Pango. Maître de chœur Nathalie Dornay. Chargée de production Anne Quermondi. Diffusion Production L'Esprit Théâtre. Co-production La Seine. Quel Est avec le soutien de la Mairie de Paris - Mairie de Paris - Mairie de Paris, la Maison des Associations de Paris-Métropole, le Centre Culturel l'Arche, le Théâtre de Nanterre, le Théâtre Antoine Vitez d'Argueil et La Case à Théâtre de Colombes. Coproduction Théâtre 13.

MAIRIE DE PARIS    

E7 *R. Bianciotto (dir.), Théâtre 13 (France).*

© 2005 CÉDRIC GATILLON.

Afterword

David Konstan

Even in this age of handbooks, manuals, and companions, it is surprising to find such a volume dedicated to the reception of Aristophanic comedy. New Comedy, the genre represented by Menander, Plautus, and Terence, gave rise to a strong tradition of imitation, adaptation, and transformation that is still very much alive, in the form of Broadway musicals, television sitcoms, romantic movies, and more. Old Comedy, however, never had the same success, whether in regard to revivals or, still less so, as the inspiration for creative variation and innovation. The present book is thus something of a landmark, and reveals the abiding impact of Aristophanic comedy in novel and unexpected ways.

The novelist and classicist Erich Segal lamented, with something of a Nietzschean nostalgia, what he perceived as the decline of comedy in the aftermath of Aristophanes. In a large book with the title, *The Death of Comedy*, he linked Old Comedy closely to sexual regeneration and triumphal resurrection. Even the earliest of Aristophanes' plays, *Acharnians*, is fundamentally about sex, despite its ostensible concern with promoting peace between Athens and Sparta: according to Segal, Dicaeopolis' basic problem is that "he was obviously sexually dysfunctional." The recovery in the end is not "a symbolic regeneration of the fields," Segal insists; rather, Aristophanes "is talking about the male member plain and simple, which, in the course of the play, goes from flaccid to rigid."¹ Subsequently, comedy went astray and lost the focus on the joys of sex. Although it was born out of ritual festivity, rejuvenation, and rebirth, it shriveled up in the face of modernist dread and despair. The biggest culprit was Samuel Beckett, and it was he and his peers—those gloomy prophets of the absurd, like Jarry, Apollinaire, and Ionesco—who went about "systematically destroying" it and ultimately sounded its death knell.² Even Charlie Chaplin had a hand in the slaughter: "throughout his *oeuvre* . . . he continued to present the waning of sexuality—or, more specifically, masculinity," and Chaplin was a major influence on Beckett, whose "heroes are all 'incapables,' sexual cripples."³ Aristophanes' heroes, Segal affirms, "ascend from old

¹ Segal (2001) 57.

² Segal (2001) 431.

³ Segal (2001) 432, 435.

age to rejuvenation, from sexual incapacity to priapic Olympic athleticism,” but Beckett “celebrates the triumph of failure,” and his characters aspire not to “rejuvenation but regression.”⁴

This gloomy narrative of comic decline (which I reviewed a while back under the title, “Who Killed Humor”—an allusion to the polemical and similarly pessimistic critique of classical philology called *Who Killed Homer?*) cannot in itself explain the marginalization of Aristophanic comedy, not only in the modern or post-modern world but as early as ancient Rome, as Niall Slater points out in his chapter in the present volume.⁵ In fact, it seems fair to say that Aristophanes’ comedies offend less for the representation of sex, such as it is, than for their obscenity, which is what has always rendered them difficult to assimilate as school texts (as the chapters by Stavroula Kiritzi and by John Given and Ralph M. Rosen explain). Another, and perhaps greater, obstacle to making these comedies accessible to young audiences is that they seem to invite identification with grown, even old men and women rather than with impassioned adolescents, as is the case with New Comedy. The spectators in the Athenian theater were mostly seasoned veterans, who could identify with, or at least comprehend, the savage isolation of a Philoctetes or the crazed Hercules slaying his family; alongside the sheer wackiness of Aristophanic heroes and the plots they devise, there was sober criticism of politics, war, imperial ambitions, law courts, education and the new philosophy, the unequal distribution of wealth, and more. The problem is to find the right balance between the bawdy, carnivalesque aspect of the plays and the social satire, which exposed genuine problems and promoted public awareness and debate.

But did Aristophanic comedy really have a serious purpose? Many scholars have denied it, and treated it as mere entertainment of a rambunctious sort, at times reduced to slapstick, even as others, on the contrary, have found in Aristophanes a staunch defender of the democracy—or else, of the aristocratic elite, but in either case a partisan figure with earnest commitments.⁶ One might wonder whether this binary opposition between coarse humor and elevated criticism is the best way to think about the effect of Aristophanes’ plays. As it happens, the tension between these two ways of reading the plays goes back to Aristophanes himself.

The first reader of Aristophanes was Aristophanes himself. I do not mean this in the trivial sense in which he read before anyone else what he had

4 Segal (2001) 451, 452.

5 Konstan (2003).

6 See Walsh (2009).

just written on the page: this can be said of any author. Aristophanes, however, was his own critic, and in each successive comedy he pondered on and reinterpreted what he had produced before; what is more, he suggested how the present work ought to be received and understood by current and future audiences. He also had one eye constantly on his predecessors and rivals, and he attempted to situate himself favorably in relation to them, disparaging their styles and affirming the merits, both moral and aesthetic, of his own. The reception of Aristophanes thus begins with Aristophanes himself. In this way, moreover, he orchestrated his preeminence among ancient critics, who so solidified his reputation that his comedies continued to be copied and read in the Byzantine era, despite their bawdiness and often cryptic topical allusions (these had the virtue, to be sure, of providing material for learned commentaries). Thus, a book like this one on the reception of Aristophanes very properly begins with his dramas, which are a part of their own tradition.

To hear him tell it, Aristophanes was more sophisticated than vulgar competitors such as Cratinus and Eupolis, avoiding their crude language, childish jokes, and personal eccentricities, such as Cratinus' legendary drunkenness (which he himself caricatured). If they beat him out for first prize at the festivals, it was because they catered to the debased taste of the majority, whereas he, Aristophanes, appealed rather to the wise, the *sophoi*, who were capable of understanding him—or so he would have us believe. But Aristophanes was not content to console himself with such a snobbish dismissal of his rivals; rather, he sought to educate the public so that they could appreciate his higher form of comedy. All this is to be gleaned from the parabases and other passages in his plays, as Zachary Biles, Mario Teló, and others have shown.⁷

And yet, when we read Aristophanes, he seems to be no less rude or naughty than the others (to judge by the fragments we possess of Cratinus and the rest), equally prepared to insert a lewd gag or some stagey horseplay, and not necessarily more high-minded in his political stance or stances (Plato clearly believed that Aristophanes' *Clouds* was a significant factor in the condemnation of Socrates, as Donna Zuckerberg observes). As I have mentioned, scholars to this day debate whether Aristophanes was a sympathizer of the democracy or a partisan of the aristocracy, or perhaps a nostalgic *laudator temporis acti*, when life was, or rather was thought to be, simpler and politics less polarized. Burning down Socrates' think tank in *Clouds* while his disciples are still inside hardly seems enlightened on the part of Strepsiades, the hero of the drama, and arguments to the effect that Aristophanes was merely accommodating

7 See Biles (2011) and Teló (2016).

the audience in the second production, since they had ranked his play last at the first performance, do little to rescue his reputation in this regard: evidently he wanted to win and did whatever he thought it took to do so.

This double aspect to Aristophanes' comedies—their self-proclaimed and to some degree self-evident dignity, both artistic and intellectual, and their often bawdy, down-to-earth themes, language, plots, and humor—continued to puzzle later readers, and accounts in part for the mixed reception he has received through the ages. People may approve or disapprove of him, but he is never uncontroversial. He is thus a particularly interesting case for reception studies. Henry Fielding, for example, was a playwright in addition to being a novelist (most famous, of course, as the author of *Tom Jones*), but to call him a modern Aristophanes turns out to have been more condemnation than praise, as Matthew Kinservik shows in his chapter in this book. Fielding's satirical style of comedy contributed in part to the enactment of strict censorship laws for the theater, but beyond that his plays were thought to lack finesse, and in this too he was deemed comparable to his Greek forerunner.

Very well: Aristophanes' comedies have seemed bawdy, rambling, plotless, lowbrow, and unfit for school curriculums or stage production, and yet the very fact of their survival, or at least the survival of eleven of them, means that they somehow made it through the filter of Byzantine Christian copyists, whether because they were appreciated for their purity of Attic dialect or for their wit or moral message, which Aristophanes himself trumpeted, as we have seen, and which the monks can be forgiven for believing. There will always be objectors to satire and humor, which is meant to push buttons by exposing hypocrisy and illustrating vices, and making people laugh into the bargain. In our more liberal times (which are nevertheless perpetually under threat from the hydra-like incarnations of puritanism), Aristophanes is a touchstone for such ambivalences. As a classical writer, he has a certain prestige that counts in his favor, but he can just as easily be condemned as appealing to a primitive or vulgar sensibility (like Plautus in Rome), and he makes it all the easier to praise or blame him since he himself was evidently conscious of the double-sided impact of his plays and did not hesitate to call attention to it. The Aristophanic complex goes right back to the beginning, and we may rightly associate the entire muddle with his name.

Reception, however, is a complex phenomenon. It is not exactly the same as what used to be called the classical tradition, which traced the influence of ancient literature on modern texts, identifying allusions or models and emphasizing the continuity of the classical heritage through repeated recuperations

and reinventions.⁸ Such studies require a thorough knowledge of the Greek and Latin sources, but once they have been tracked and classified, it is the expert in the modern works who is in the best position to understand what such appropriations mean and how they are to be interpreted. Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* is clearly inspired by Plautus' *Menaechmi*, just as Molière's *L'Avare* is by Plautus' *Aulularia*; nevertheless, classicists might feel at a disadvantage in interpreting the later comedies, which are naturally in the province of the Shakespearean scholar or the student of seventeenth-century French theater. Reception in the widest sense, however, does not take influence to be a one-way street. Paradoxical as it may seem, there is a sense in which a modern adaptation of Aristophanes may alter the meaning or nature of the Aristophanic original. We respond to an ancient text differently from the first readers or viewers, and it behooves us to discover all we can about their values and expectations so as to share something of their experience. But they would have profited as well from a knowledge of how their literature is perceived or adapted today. The experience of literature is dispersed over all the horizons of understanding through which it is and has been filtered, from the beginning. Aristophanes has the virtue of having called attention to his own part in redefining the sense of his comedies, and reception criticism is simply following in his footsteps.

Walter Benjamin, in his well-known and influential essay, "The Task of the Translator," put the case for the reciprocal relationship between source text and recipient elegantly: "Translations that are more than transmissions of subject matter come into being when a work, in the course of its survival, has reached the age of its fame . . . In them the life of the originals attains its latest, continually renewed, and most complete unfolding."⁹ Translation, or adaptation, alters the language in which the original finds its renewal and fulfillment:

8 Cf. the comments of Broder: "In the classical tradition model, Greco-Roman antiquity provides the foundation for, and influences the development of, modern Europe and Western civilization. According to the classical reception model, individuals and societies continually reappropriate and redefine classical antiquity in an effort to assert (or, at times, to challenge) continuity with a privileged past" (Broder (2013) 505); and De Pourcq: "the term 'reception' has become an important shorthand for the resistance within literary studies against . . . affirmative notions of tradition. Literary works are no longer seen to have an immanent value, but are time and again 'received' and '(re)appropriated' by new cultural communities" (De Pourcq (2012) 219). See also Budelmann and Haubold (2008) 13–25; and Jenkins (2015) 20–4.

9 Benjamin (1996) 255.

"For just as the tenor and the significance of the great works of literature undergo a complete transformation over the centuries, the mother tongue of the translator is transformed as well . . . Translation is so far removed from being the sterile equation of two dead languages that of all literary forms it is the one charged with the special mission of watching over the maturing process of the original language and the birth pangs of its own."¹⁰

Reception, of course, goes well beyond translation, and may be observed in the least likely places. Dimitrios Yatromanolakis, for example, has shown how the Surrealist movement, which defined itself in opposition to the classical heritage, nevertheless was indebted to it in profound ways. André Breton may have asserted, "How beautiful the world is/Greece never existed."¹¹ But Yatromanolakis moves beyond the "rather short-sighted focus on the avant-garde's 'disavowal' of Greek antiquity and its cultural legacy," and calls attention instead to "the complex ways in which the avant-garde's overall antagonistic stance toward sanctioned socio-political and cultural principles was actually *informed* by ancient Greek cultural discourses, most notably mythology."¹² Mark Payne finds resonances between Aristophanes' *Wasps* and the Jamaican music producer Lee "Scratch" Perry; but more than that, he reads Aristophanes' animal choruses through the lens of emerging notions of the common species of animals and human beings that he terms "hum-animal." Payne's ambition is "to open the study of Aristophanes to the potential for renewed interrogation of the dramatic agents of Old Comedy that is afforded by the burgeoning field of animal studies in the humanities at large." These are not terms that Aristophanes or his contemporaries would have used—how does one say "humanities" in Greek?—and yet, such an approach does not falsify Aristophanes' comedies but rather enriches them.

For all that, Aristophanes comedies seem especially to resist the solemn analyses of the reception school. There are, I think, two reasons for this defiance. The first is their sheer boisterousness, their wild linguistic coinages, their madcap protagonists: what deeper meaning can possibly lurk behind so flamboyant a facade? Sure, modern schoolmasters felt the need to bowdlerize him, or still better, exclude him from the curriculum, and the recovery of Aristophanes for the theater would seem to be due solely to a relaxation of censorship in times more open to earthy humor. The second reason why Aristophanes seems to push back at reception theory is that he is a classic, to be appreciated, revered, and criticized, if at all, on bended knee, as Goethe

10 Benjamin (1996) 256. See Dudouyt, Wyles, Walsh, and Baker in this volume.

11 "Que c'est beau le monde/La Grèce n'a jamais existé"; Breton (1948) 236.

12 Yatromanolakis (2012) 5.

recommended. His comedies are among those texts that launched the classical tradition, and if they have seemed to be inimitable, or more so than most other genres, that too is a sign of their genius. What is interesting about both these takes on the reception of Aristophanes is that they can be traced back, as we have seen, to Aristophanes himself. He gave us the image of his comedies as exemplary models of high seriousness, and at the same time, by his very claims to propriety and morality, made their zany nonsense all the more evident. Stephen Kidd, in his penetrating book on nonsense and meaning in ancient Greek comedy, has posed the question of why Aristophanic comedy seems to resist efforts to assign meaning—though this does not stop critics from repeatedly discovering meanings in it.¹³ For nonsense there is in Aristophanes, aplenty. Aristophanes, then, raised the challenge to the very premises of reception. Fortunately, the scholars who have contributed to this volume were not intimidated or confounded by his wily defenses, but slipped through the trap he set and have given him the reception he deserves.

13 Kidd (2014).

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